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THE

THEOLOGY OF LUTHER

IN ITS

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNER HARMONY.

DR. JULIUS KÖSTLIN,
PROFESSOR AND CONSISTORIALRATH AT HALLE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND GERMAN EDITION
BY
REV. CHARLES E. HAY, A. M.

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PRINCIPAL POINTS IN WHICH AN ADVANCE IS MANIFEST IN THE DOCTRINE OF LUTHER AFTER HIS RETIREMENT AT THE WARTBURG: DEVELOPED IN OPPOSITION TO TENDENCIES WHICH APPEARED UPON THE TERRITORY OF THE REFORMATION ITSELF.

CHAPTER II.*

OPPOSITION TO THE FALSELY EVANGELICAL SPIRIT.

INTRODUCTORY.

At the very first outbreak of the fanatical spirit, by means of which, in the pointed phrase of Luther, the devil hurled himself upon the right side instead of upon the left, the full significance and magnitude of the danger thus threatening was, as above remarked, recognized by the Reformer. We have now to observe, further, that he ever afterward felt himself justified in recognizing, in all the doctrines and persons claiming to maintain with him the general evangelical view of saving truth, but to present it in a purer, freer and more spiritual form than he, the features of the same spirit which he was compelled to combat in Carlstadt, the Zwickau prophets, and Münzer. He brought this charge against Zwingli with peculiar energy. The entire character of his controversy with the latter was, from the very first, determined by this conception. There was certainly, at all events, an actual bond of fellowship between the varied tendencies of the character now referred to, as over against the position of Luther, whatever may be the opinion held as to the differences between these various parties, or as to the validity of the claims made by them to an equal justification in their own appeal to the Gospel. For

* Chapter I. of Book III. is included in Volume I. This has been done in order to give the two volumes of the English translation a uniform size and at the same time present in one volume the entire development of Luther's views in conflict with Roman Catholicism. The present volume thus embraces only those modifications and developments of the Reformer's doctrine which were occasioned by his opposition to the falsely evangelical spirit, followed by the systematic survey of the positions which he finally attained. In order to adhere more closely to the original, and to facilitate comparison with it, it was not deemed advisable to change the Chapter number, although the present plan involves a certain awkwardness in beginning this volume of the English translation with Chapter II. of Book III. of the original.

Luther, the characteristic feature common to them all was that indicated in his remark: "The devil is here trying to make us altogether too evangelical." In accordance with *his own* conception, we therefore here speak, in general terms, of the "falsely evangelical spirit" which he was called upon to oppose.

We embrace in a separate chapter, as one whole, the entire development attained by his views and doctrines in conflict with these new enemies. Already before the controversy with Zwingli, he had thoroughly elaborated his principles upon all the chief questions involved in the general agitation. The argument with Zwingli was concerned mainly with the further definition of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Accordingly, our review of the period falls naturally into two sections.

We meet at this point a serious difficulty in the historical presentation of the development of the Reformer's views, especially in regard to the *Theses* upon the Lord's Supper drawn up in opposition to Zwingli. The entire doctrine of the person of Christ, and even that of the nature of God and His relation to the created universe, here become involved, and are carried to weighty conclusions. Yet, in our historical study, we have thus far found neither occasion nor space to present these subjects expressly, or in their inner relationships. They, and with them also the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as Luther now presents it, can be set in a clear light only in a systematic presentation of his entire developed theology, such as we can offer only in the closing portion of this work. Our immediate task must, therefore, be simply to present distinctly the leading ideas of Luther in regard to the sacrament as they were developed in the course of the present conflict. The significance of this doctrine in the entire framework of his system, and the basis of the interest which he felt in maintaining it, will require our careful attention at the proper time. Various separate points elaborated in the controversial writings directed against Zwingli will also find appropriate place in the final systematic review. There, too, finally, we shall be called upon to present in a comprehensive way his doctrine of the person of Christ and of God, and can there, as the nature of the case requires, present them before the full discussion of the doctrines of the Lord's Supper and the means of grace in general.

Section I. Doctrines and Demands Opposed by Luther before his Controversy with Zwingli.

1. *The Nature and Inner Mutual Relations of these Doctrines and Demands.*

OUTBREAK AT WITTENBERG—CARLSTADT—MÜNZER—PRIESTLY VESTMENTS—HAND OR MOUTH—COMMUNION WITHOUT CONFESSION—FASTS—PICTURES—INWARD ILLUMINATION—INFANT BAPTISM—VIOLENCE—DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED—LAWS OF MOSES—LAY ACTIVITY—MYSTICISM—MORALITY—MAN'S RELATION TO GOD—UNBRIDLED LICENSE AND FANATICAL LEGALITY.

From the latter part of the year 1521, that spirit which Luther described as "altogether too evangelical," but which he was fully convinced could be rightly treated only as a spirit of falsehood, spread with rapidity and violence, throwing off gradually all disguise. It is not surprising that even honest confessors of Christian truth were deeply agitated by it, either wavering in their own estimate of its true character, or sorely alarmed at the encroachments of the hostile power. Very remarkable, also, from a historical point of view, is the varied and even mutually contradictory character of the elements which here combined in one general movement.

First came the *Disorderly Assaults upon the Mass* at Wittenberg. Carlstadt had borne a part in these, placing himself at the head of the movement. The fury of the storm was visited not only upon those abuses which Luther had pronounced an abomination and robbery in the sanctuary, *i. e.*, the representation of the mass as a sacrifice and the denial of the cup to the laity. Nor were the agitators content with merely abolishing at once a custom so easily brought into intimate relation to the sacrificial theory as was the elevation of the host. The zeal of Carlstadt led him to assail also the customary priestly vestments and other ceremonies. It appeared to him a matter of grave importance, that the bread was no longer placed by the priest in the mouth of the communicant, but that the sacrament should be "received with the hands." He was not satisfied, now that confession to the priest was no longer compulsory, and that the torturing of consciences once associated with the practice had thus been abolished, but he

admitted the multitude indiscriminately, without any confession at all, to the privilege of communion. The liberation from all obligation to observe the fasts appointed by the Church was proclaimed as affecting all believers, without any regard for those who felt themselves still bound in conscience to observe them, and the actual public exercise of this liberty was made a test of evangelical Christianity. Carlstadt, at length, with the same passionate energy which inspired his opposition to the abomination of the mass, began to assail the pictures in the churches, declaring them to be no less contrary to the Word of God, namely, the First Commandment of the Decalogue.

Next appeared at Wittenberg the *Zwickau Prophets*. The spirit of the Reformation had broken through the barriers of outward ordinances and of the supposed human mediation of salvation, in order to place the believing soul in the immediate presence of its God and Saviour. There now arose a class of men professing to be inspired by the same spirit, and to have received, also, by virtue of this immediate fellowship with God, direct revelations from Him. Instead of the external Word of God, which they regarded as a mere letter, they laid stress upon the special inward conversations which they professed to have with their God. The same principle led them to deny the validity of infant baptism. They failed to apprehend the *spiritual* transaction, which constitutes the essence of baptism, and, in consequence, adjudged it impossible for infants to appropriate the benefits of the ordinance. As Carlstadt, who had already before their day resorted to violence in opposing that which appeared to be condemned by the divine Word, now entered into willing alliance with them; and as he had, in his warfare upon images, appealed to the Old Testament as also of binding authority,—the Anabaptists now sought not only to abolish all abuses by violent measures, but also to utterly destroy all wicked men, according to the example of Old Testament zealots and heroes. It was thus that Münzer sought to become a genuine reformer. Upon the bleeding corpses of the wicked, it was supposed, and especially of such rulers as dared to resist the Spirit, the true kingdom of God was to be established on earth.

The question, whether the Word of God, as contained in the Law of the Old Testament, must not be acknowledged as the final authority also in the sphere of all secular relations, was now

prominently agitated in yet wider circles. We have already seen Luther (for example, in his *Address to the Nobility*) extending the scope of his testimony based upon the divine Word to the discussion of secular conditions and grievances.[1] His indignation was aroused especially by the usurious rates of interest demanded, and by the general course of the great merchants and moneyed men of the day. Now, in 1524, the ministers, Strauss, in Eisenach, and Stein, in Weimar, demanded that, in accordance with the precepts of Moses, the taking of interest be entirely prohibited. A number of professional jurists also enlisted in the movement. It was maintained that, instead of the imperial laws, which were of heathen origin, and the canonical laws, which originated with the popes, the Mosaic Law must be re-established. Strauss already, in a published sermon, proposed the re-instatement of the Mosaic year of jubilee, in which every man should regain possession of his alienated patrimony, a proposition which was favorably received in portions of Würtemberg.

Returning now to the representative of this tendency who had in the beginning been most intimately associated with Luther, namely, Carlstadt, we shall find him proceeding to yet greater lengths in the same direction. He does not reject infant baptism; but he makes the essence of external baptism to consist merely in a public profession of faith toward God (in A. D. 1523).[2] He then assails the real presence of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. He rejects entirely the idea that the Lord's Supper is a gift of God to men. The forgiveness of sins is to be sought, not in the Lord's Supper, but in the sacrificial death suffered once for all by Christ. The object of the Lord's Supper is, that we may therein celebrate the memorial of this sacrifice, be led to a vivid apprehension of the death of Christ by means of "the cordial apprehension (*das freundliche Erkenntniss*) of Christ," be buried in Him, and, by an "ardent, fervid art of Christ," be transformed into His life and His death. Such apprehension of the death of Christ is to be inspired in the celebration of this memorial. He speaks, as yet, cautiously in regard to the right and duty of individual believers to engage in the public

[1] Vol. I., p. 382 sq.

[2] Cf. here and in the following connection the extracts from writings of Carlstadt found in Yäger, A. Bodenstein *v.* Carlstadt, 1856 (in this case, p. 320). Cf. also Dieckhoff, Abendmahlslehre, etc., I., 299 sqq.

preaching of the Word upon the authority of their own direct inspiration. He acknowledges that one should be elected to this office by his fellow-believers. But he claims, upon the other hand, that there is a universal commandment, requiring all Christians, as ordained priests, to make known the name of God, and to proclaim it to their brethren. He is not willing to conceal the Word of God for fear of committing an unavoidable sin. He openly maintains, further, that believers in general should, as far as possible, take active part in the violent measures against the idolatrous worship of images. He holds the prohibition of images to be as truly binding forever as that of theft, that of spiritual adultery as still no less authoritative than the injunction against carnal infidelity. Wherever Christians have the power, they should pay no regard to any human authority, but should freely, and upon their own responsibility, overturn whatever is opposed to God. How far he was now prepared to go in his application of the Old Testament may be inferred from the case of a certain man who was led by his advice to follow the example of the ancients in taking a second wife. Upon hearing this, Luther remarked: Perhaps they will circumcise themselves, too, by and by, in Orlamund.[1]

What a strange combination of contrary principles in this outbreak of the "altogether too evangelical" spirit! Such a contempt for all things external; a conception of the sacraments which regarded them, in the language of Carlstadt, as too gross to reach the depths of the human soul; a bold exaltation of the inward above the outward Word: and yet, upon the other hand, this harping upon trifling externalities, such as the taking of the sacrament with the hands; this falling back upon the letter of the Old Testament; this frantic zeal of Münzer and his followers for the establishment by violent means of an external kingdom of God, whose abominable and carnal nature was finally revealed to the world at Münster.

The views of Carlstadt, and, no less, those of the Zwickau Prophets and of Münzer, were developed from an original source whose very significant and powerful influence upon the development of the evangelical views and reformatory character of Luther himself we have already traced. This was none other than the

[1] Briefe, ii, 459.

principles of that MYSTICISM which had already before the Reformation, amid all the externality of the prevalent ecclesiasticism, pointed out to spirits of a deeper mould the way to true inward fellowship with God. Nor is it so difficult as it might at first appear to discover, from the manner in which these early Mystics proceeded to develop, from their point of view, a consistent conception of Christianity, the point of transition to this other side of the intellectual tendency which they represented.

"Study the German Theology," exhorts Carlstadt in one of his writings;[1] and we recall at once the similar recommendation of Luther at an earlier period.[2] Carlstadt's fundamental moral and religious demand is that man shall *sever himself from all created things*, that he shall become dead to the creature in his own will and allow God alone to work all things within him, in order that he may at length become completely deified. Münzer requires this same withdrawal from all created things, which he describes as a refining process (*Entgröbung*). We are here again reminded of the utterances of Luther, in the years preceding the indulgence controversy, concerning complete self-renunciation, opposition to everything which is not God, and the sole agency of God in us. The great difference between Luther and these men centres in the inference which the latter drew from the principles indicated as to the significance of external means of grace. According to their views, inasmuch as the soul, in its exaltation above everything external and created, becomes one with God, God Himself can no longer bind His own saving agency, nor the impartation of salvation, to anything whatsoever of an external nature. Everything of this kind must prove too gross to reach the depths of the soul. Luther contended against any such inference.

Yet it was by no means merely the drawing of certain inferences, or the refusing to do so, that occasioned the controversy. We have already called attention to the peculiar character which the mystical view itself at the very beginning assumed in the mind of Luther, and by virtue of which he then already parted company with the Mystics of the Middle Ages in his theory of salvation. We have emphasized especially the important place assumed in his view by the ethical—by the moral personality.

[1] Jäger, 333. [2] Vol. I., p. 135.

We now find the direct opposite of this as a characteristic feature of Carlstadt's, and yet more distinctly of Münzer's, conception of the process of salvation. The moral struggle against the sin which is rooted in man's own will and brings him into bondage under created things becomes, in the theory of the latter, a mere empty withdrawal (abstraction) from the finite and individual. This runs out into "idleness and languor," which are, as Carlstadt says, to wear off the coarse integuments of the heart and relieve its constipation. Then, too, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon man is no longer thought of as the impartation of a personal God to a moral human personality. But is not such an experience, viz., a personal, ethical intercourse between God and man, in which the latter receives the divine truth presented to the conscious mind, not in gloomy, "languid" brooding and waiting, but in personal apprehension, the very purpose of an *objectively presented* divine Word? In the case of Luther's adversaries, at all events, the boasted "inner word" was always found in intimate connection with the above unchristian conception of the entire relation of man to God.

We have already spoken of the significance allowed or denied by the ancient Mystics to the objective, historical Christ and the atoning work consummated in His sufferings and death, a significance which was, as we have seen, always maintained in Luther's conception of the plan of salvation. What was there said as to the failure to recognize it, or the actual denial of it, applies also to the mysticism of Carlstadt and notably to that of Münzer. With this the doctrine of Carlstadt upon the Lord's Supper also stands in close connection. He points back, indeed, from the Holy Supper to the atoning work and sacrificial death of Christ, whose memorial is to be here celebrated. But he does not make the essence of a proper celebration to consist in the reliance of faith upon the objective, crucified Christ, but finds it directly in a death and life effected by the "fervid art" in the subject himself, which is typified in the life and death of Christ. And he even places the significance of the sacrificial death of Christ itself in the fact that it reveals to us what God *desires us to do*. The significance of the Christ for us, and of His death, is merely that of a type, by the fervid apprehension of which the Christ in us is to be actualized.

From what has just been said it is evident that faith could not,

upon the theory of Carlstadt, attain the specific and fundamental significance which it has for Luther. There is wanting, not only the objective basis upon which faith as such must rest, but also all proper sense of that moral and religious relation of man to God in which faith finds its essential atmosphere. Carlstadt's representations of the relation existing between faith and love are altogether confused and variable. Both, although unification with God is to be effected in them, are yet swept away in that bare, negative, abstracted condition in which, as we have heard, the soul opens itself to God. Carlstadt makes of both equally a "spiritual circumcision," by means of which the heart is prepared for the reception of the divine love.

Carlstadt now boasts that according to his conception of Christ and His salvation *the Gospel is much richer* than when it is made to consist essentially, as in Luther, in the forgiveness of sins (as resting upon the objective work of atonement and to be appropriated in faith). Where, he triumphantly inquires, is there room in the latter's system for the Gospel of the Spirit of Christ, of the fullness of Christ, of the rich gifts of Messiah? He claims, also, that he places the entire process of the appropriation of salvation in a closer relation to Christ Himself than is done by Luther; as, for example, in the whole conception of *repentance*, the beginning of which Luther traced, not to the effectual working of the proclamation of grace in Christ, but to the office of the Law as over against that of the Gospel. According to Carlstadt, repentance should be throughout a repentance in the name of Christ. In it man crucifies his own life through the apprehension of the crucified Christ. Not the Law, but the apprehension of Christ, tears the heart away from itself and its sins. But, it may be asked, can the individual under such a conception of the subject secure, or be certain of possessing, that without which there can be for the sinner no peace, no joy in God, no true participation in the riches of grace, *i. e.*, the very endowment now in question, the forgiveness of sins, in connection with which Luther also profoundly appreciates all the blessings incident to the fellowship of Christ? The truth is, that the significance which must, in any case, be attributed to atonement and forgiveness was not at all comprehended by Carlstadt. And how, we are led still further to inquire, according to this whole conception of the relation and unification between God and man, is the individual to actually

attain full fellowship with Christ and the secure possession of salvation? Can he ever, with all his own effort, reach that state of complete severance from earthly things at which he aims, or complete "resignation"? And, in so far as he does attain it, will he be sure of the indwelling of God, and not experience in its place only a dreary languor, in which his own spirit will then seek to fill the void, in part by artful and forced ecstasy, in part by a fanatical zeal for the kingdom of God in the midst of an evil and unbelieving world?

From this point of view we can understand, finally, how this professedly so free and wholly inward tendency of thought could be diverted into the channels of a *new externality and a new legality;* for it did not in reality attain to that true evangelical liberty which faith enjoys upon the sure foundation of an accomplished atonement. It only remained to be seen, therefore, whether this wrongly-apprehended liberty should become a mere unbridled license, or should fall back into a new form of legality. Both results are exemplified, side by side and mingled in inextricable confusion, in the Anabaptist agitations of the day. But it was not the spirit of the Reformation which gave birth to this movement. It is, much rather, essentially at one with agitations of the pre-reformation period, which opposed Catholicism and yet, in common with it, utterly failed to grasp the central principle of saving truth and of real Christian liberty.

2. *The Teaching of Luther in Opposition to these Doctrines and Demands.*

1. THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE OF SALVATION.

LAW AND GOSPEL—POSITIVE FAITH.

We have already, when endeavoring to depict the steady advance of Luther against the entrenched positions of the Catholic ecclesiastical system, referred to his opposition to the revolutionary measures of the Wittenberg fanatics in regard to the details of public worship, fasts, etc. We know, too, that his zealous advocacy of the love which leads the strong to make allowance for the prejudices of the weak was not a new departure upon his part—not, as some might infer, called forth by alarm at the outbreak

of violence.[1] At the same time, it is worthy of note that Luther does not even now, in the interest of this forbearing love, apologize for those features of the prevailing worship in which he had hitherto recognized an abomination and robbery in the holy ordinances of God. He still maintains with all earnestness that no evangelical Christian can again offer the sacrifice of the mass, nor celebrate another private mass. The question at issue is not, whether truly believing persons should be advised to still participate in the "abominations" out of love for others and for the sake of peace, but whether, among believers whose faith and apprehension of the truth are yet immature, the objectionable services may or should be abolished by force of mere authority. In discountenancing the latter course, Luther says: "I do not wish to compel any one who is without faith," etc. A broad line of distinction is drawn also between such matters and things which, while not essentially evil, are yet such in so far as they are made a positive law and a snare for the conscience. It is the observance of these external things in which the believer, himself free, may out of love for others restrict himself. Among such things are to be classed the "taking of the sacrament in the hand and the eating of eggs and meat." This is the "trifling fool's-business" of which Luther speaks at one place.[2]

But in the case of Luther, as in that of his opponents, we must go back yet further, and note the principles which lie at the basis of all his conduct and teaching. We shall find in them nothing but that with which we have already grown familiar. Even in that period of Luther's development in which he was originally and most deeply influenced by the earlier Mysticism, there was always a clearly-marked line of distinction between his view and that which formed the basis of Carlstadt's theories. It is, indeed, true, that the conflict induced by the bold assumptions of Carlstadt's mysticism served to bring out into clearer light the mutually contradictory character of the two points of view; and Luther was, no doubt, thus induced to emphasize more strongly, even with all his power of thought and expression, those doctrinal elements which he himself, although never under

[1] Cf. *e. g.*, the closing paragraphs of the pamphlet, *De libertate Christiana.*

[2] Briefe, ii, 121. Cf., on the other hand, Schenkel, Wesen des Protestantismus. Second Edition, p. 44.

any circumstances rejecting, had yet never specifically developed, which might even appear to be retained only as matters of incidental importance, and in regard to which it might be seriously doubted whether they could actually maintain any permanent place in his doctrinal system. We have reference to the significance of the external, objective means of grace and of an established external order in the affairs of the Church.

Luther himself, in the preface of his pamphlet, *Wider die himmlischen Propheten*,[1] conducts us at once into the depths of the scriptural doctrine of salvation, embedded in which are found the principles which furnish ample refutation of Carlstadt's mystical theory of the appropriation of salvation, and which place the seal of condemnation, as well, upon his outward and violent zeal.

We should diligently seek, says he, to discriminate very widely between the two classes of doctrine, namely, that which treats of the principal articles of faith, teaching us how to govern the conscience within as in the presence of God, and that which merely gives instruction in regard to outward works and things.

He then undertakes to enumerate briefly these principal articles of Christian doctrine, which it is the duty of every one to observe before all else. The first place he assigns to the preaching of the Law, by which man learns to discover and recognize sin. When the consciences of men have been by this means alarmed and humiliated before the wrath of God, the comforting Word of the Gospel and the forgiveness of sins should then be proclaimed. These two articles, which are, after all, the most important, are found, he declares, neither among these nor among any other false prophets. It is only *after* these prime articles that Luther places "the judgment, or work, of crucifying the old man" with his works, and, also, the sufferings and tortures in which we by self-discipline, fasting, watching, working, etc., and by enduring persecution and shame at the hands of others, crucify our flesh. Then, further, should begin works of love toward one's fellowmen, performed with gentleness, patience, etc. Finally, he speaks of the administration of the Law—not for believers, but for the rude and unbelieving throng, the domineering multitude—bodily and harshly, with outward compulsion and the sword.

[1] Composed toward the end of the year 1524: appeared in 1525. Erl. Ed., xxix, 138 sqq.

The significance attaching to this view of the separate elements enumerated, in their mutual relations, lies for us in its direct opposition to the teaching of the mysticism proclaimed by Carlstadt. The most important feature of the presentation thus given is seen in the position which is assigned to the message of grace as such, or to Christ as the Reconciler and Saviour (and hence, also, to the faith which appropriates the comforting message), at the very centre of the system. That the words of Christ and the history of His life and sufferings, as rehearsed in the pulpit, also lead to the knowledge of sin, Luther had never denied, nor failed to acknowledge; but the commandments of Christ and the preaching of the incidents of His life, in so far as they have this effect, were regarded by him as discharging the office of the Law. We shall have occasion to elucidate this point more fully in Book IV., especially when tracing Luther's refutation of the Antinomianism of Agricola. But Luther discriminates between this influence of the preaching of the Gospel, and the Gospel itself, as such, or the message of grace in Christ; and he does so the more carefully, the more directly it becomes his aim to present a pure and inspiring testimony to the latter. It is only, in his view, from that fellowship with Christ as the Saviour to which the Gospel leads that there can result any effectual crucifixion of the flesh, just as the power and inclination to any positively good deed can be derived from no other source. He now, likewise, discriminates with great care between this crucifixion of the flesh upon the part of the believer and the terrors and qualms of conscience awakened by the Law in the soul of man before the Spirit of grace has found an entrance through the Gospel. He thus teaches, it is true, in harmony with Carlstadt, that the crucifixion of the flesh must be achieved in Christ, and according to His example; but he claims that it can be accomplished only upon the basis of a previous reception of Christ to the heart as the Reconciler and Saviour. And the real and peculiar organ for such a reception of Christ is not the heart as having, by its own effort and in accordance with Christ's example, prepared a place for the Lord, or as having emptied itself to the point of blank vacuity, but it is the heart simply as *believing* the comforting message concerning Christ and the forgiveness of sins. It is, in other words, faith, as an unconditional, trustful apprehension of this grace—in which, indeed, is implied a renunciation of all

worthiness or good in self, but from which alone can result, by means of the grace now granted, the actual conquest of the flesh in the life of the believer. Thus, the difference between the significance of such a faith and that of self-mortification, resignation, etc., in the appropriation of salvation, has now been distinctly presented by the Reformer. The distinction had been often overlooked by him in his original devotion to the mystical studies. But from this time onward, he never wavers from the position here so clearly taken. Even in the intervening period, he had been gradually learning to apprehend faith in its true simplicity. We do not find, for example, in his deeply mystical treatise upon *Christian Liberty* any trace of the earlier interchange of the terms faith and self-renunciation, self-mortification, etc. He charges upon the new prophets, that, according to their teachings, as well as in the Romish Church, Christ and His everlasting treasures are to be secured through works (of self-mortification). But, he reminds them, no one can follow the example of Christ, bear His cross, etc., unless he have first received Christ to his heart by *faith*. This treasure is secured through the Word, *i. e.*, through the hearing of the Gospel, since we learn to recognize sin chiefly from the Word of God, in which the Spirit reproves the world; and we then hear the Word which announces the grace of Christ, in which Word the Spirit comes and gives (us) faith. Thus, he says further, with special reference to the impartation of grace in the Lord's Supper and that memorial of Christ which Carlstadt presented as a substitute: that the latter makes of the words of Christ again mere commandments and laws—of the knowledge of Christ, a work which we do; that his theology rises no higher than to the mere admonition to follow Christ; that it makes of Christ only an example and a lawgiver.[1]

[1] Erl. Ed., xxix, 211, 276, 278.

2. OPPOSITION TO FALSE EXTERNALITY AND DEFENCE OF THE DIVINELY-APPOINTED EXTERNAL MEANS OF GRACE AND OF EXTERNAL ORDER IN THE CHURCH.

A. *Opposition to False Externality and Legality.*

FREEDOM FROM ORDINANCES—MOSAIC LAW NOT BINDING—NATURAL LAWS PERMANENT—MOSAIC LAW AS MODEL.

Such was the thoroughly evangelical point of view from which Luther derived the consciousness of real freedom from outward forms and ordinances. He felt himself free, also, in matters connected with divine worship which had, indeed, like the elevation of the host at the Lord's Supper, been hitherto connected with anti-Christian practices, but which could nevertheless also be interpreted in a Christian sense. We are, says he, free and Christian, and can therefore elevate the sacrament or not elevate it, however, wherever, whenever, and as long as we please. For the express purpose of bearing public testimony against the dictatorial spirit of Carlstadt, he now retained the custom in the parish church at Wittenberg, although it had been abolished in the convent church. He took the same position in regard to the clerical vestments, the taking of the sacrament with the hand, etc. To those who thought it necessary to follow strictly the example of Christ, and not merely the words of institution, in the observance of the Lord's Supper, he represented, that we ought, upon their principle, to hold the meal nowhere else than in a plastered hall at Jerusalem.[1] As Luther regarded Carlstadt's theory of the way of salvation as a reïnstatement of human works in the place of grace and faith, so he saw in his insistence upon external things a tyranny, in no wise better than that of the Papacy. The abomination sanctioned by Carlstadt serves no less, he declared, to disturb the consciences of men than the papal prohibitions of food and marriage; for eating and drinking are, indeed, but trifling external matters, yet they torture the soul

[1] Erl. Ed., 188 sqq., 193. Cf. for the Christian interpretation of the elevation of the host, supra Vol. I., pp. 348, 351, 394; and also Erl. Ed., xvii, 68 (A. D. 1521). Upon the elevation itself, cf. Formula Missæ, etc. (1523), Jena, ii, 590; Deutsche Messe (1526), Erl. Ed., xxii, 241.

to death if, through a multitude of laws, the conscience be ensnared therein.[1]

The assault upon images gave occasion to Luther to define clearly and positively the relation of believers, rejoicing in the liberty of Christ, to the outward ordinances of Moses. And, from the assurance with which he opposes the entire tendency in this direction, it is very evident how clear and firmly-established must have been his own convictions and his comprehension of the subject before the outbreak of the disturbances.[2]

At first, indeed, he merely maintains against the zealots, that even the Decalogue itself prohibits the images only when set apart as objects of worship. Moses interprets himself in the context, in which he is seeking to guard only against idolatry, and, still further, in Lev. xxvi. 1, where the making "of images is distinctly represented as preparatory to the worshiping of them." Memorial or symbolical images, such as crucifixes and images of saints, are, even according to the Mosaic Law, to be tolerated, and are even regarded as commendable and honorable; as, for example, the memorial-stones mentioned in Josh. xxiv. 27 and 1 Sam. vii. 12.[3]

But Luther then undertakes to speak, further, as a Christian addressing Christian readers, from the standpoint of the new covenant. Here he boldly declares that Moses was given only to the Jewish people, and has nothing to do with us Gentiles and Christians.[4] In reply to an inquiry addressed to him, he had already, in 1522, declared: The Christian is at liberty to observe the judicial and ceremonial appointments of Moses, but he is not commanded to do so. He then refers the questioner to the *Loci* of Melanchthon. He expresses himself in a similar way to Spalatin, in 1524, in regard to the civil law of Moses, with special reference to the controversy which, as we have seen, had arisen

[1] Erl. Ed., xxix, 148.

[2] Under different provocation and from a different point of view, he had expressed himself in 1523 in regard to the relation to the O. T. Law, in his pamphlet, Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, etc. Erl. Ed., xxii, 74 sq. Against the establishment upon the O. T. of the right of Christians to wield the sword of civil government, it had been objected that the latter is no longer of binding authority. To this he replied, that it is abolished in such sense that we are no longer *compelled* to observe it under penalty of the loss of the soul, but that we are free either to observe or to neglect it.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxix, 143 sqq., 149 sq.

[4] Ibid., p. 150.

upon that subject. Denying that the latter is yet binding, he substitutes for it the actually existing law (*nostra jura civilia, sub quibus vivimus*). He establishes this position further, upon the basis of his controlling evangelical principle, in a formal opinion rendered in May, 1524, to the Elector Frederick. Christians, he declares, have nothing to do with these external, secular things. But, in so far as they are called upon *as men* to take part in such affairs, they should accommodate themselves to the people among whom they live, since this can be done without endangering faith. More definitely, they should observe the laws of the government which has been providentially placed over them, as is taught in 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17; Rom. xiii. 1.[1]

Now, however, in his publication, *Wider die himmlischen Propheten*, he presents, in the most comprehensive form, his opinion upon the entire question concerning the Mosaic Law; and it is from this document mainly that we must derive the material for our study of the present period. He bases upon 1 Tim. i. 9 and Acts xvi. 10 the proposition, that Moses, with all his laws, is entirely abrogated for Christian believers. He takes issue with the view, that this is true only of the ceremonies and judicial appointments, of the ordinances of Moses in regard to external worship and government, and is not applicable to the Decalogue, in which, it is said, there is nothing ceremonial or judicial. He rejects this "old and common," indeed, but yet ignorantly-made distinction. In the Ten Commandments are, much rather, included all the others, since it was the very object of Moses by means of the ceremonial ordinances to teach the observance of the First Table, and by means of the judicial ordinances, the observance of the Second Table (obedience to parents, marital fidelity, etc.). In the Decalogue itself God has expressly placed two ceremonies, viz., images and the Sabbath. Whoever, therefore, desires or thinks it necessary to keep one commandment of Moses *as such*, must keep them all, as Paul argues in Gal. v. 3. That the discussion of images (Bilderei) in the First Commandment, and no less the Sabbath, is to be included under the heading of "temporal ceremonies," Luther proves by the utterances of Paul touching holy-days, or Sabbaths, according to which the latter are a mere shadow of things to come, and are

[1] Briefe, ii, 213, 489, 519 sq.

now no longer to be observed (Col. ii. 16, 17; Gal. iv. 10, 11), and by the expressions in 1 Cor. viii., according to which "idols are nothing in the world." God, says Luther, is concerned only about the presence of idols in the heart, that is, that we should not worship them nor trust in them. The external idol does not hinder our conscience nor our faith.

But how then? Since the Law of Moses has entirely lost its validity, have the commandments to serve God, to do no murder, etc., also been abolished? To this question Luther replies, that he has been speaking of the Law of Moses as such. But that man should have a God, should not commit adultery, etc., is not a Law of Moses alone, but also a natural law. Even the heathen have knowledge of it. It is written upon the heart of every man. Where, now, the laws of Moses and the laws of nature coincide, the Law remains in force (except in so far as it is *spiritually* abrogated by faith, which is nothing else than a fulfilling of the Law (Rom. iii. 28). On the contrary, image-making and Sabbath, and everything which Moses has appointed in addition to the natural law, is now abolished and a matter of liberty, having been given only to the Jewish people specifically; just as when an emperor or king establishes special laws and ordinances for his own land, such as, for example, the old law-code of Saxony, and yet the common natural laws, concerning obedience to parents, etc., still prevail and remain in force in all lands. We Gentiles should not be disturbed by introducing among us the Moses of the Jews, just as France does not have the law-code of Saxony and yet agrees with it upon questions of natural law.

If we now turn back from this exposition to the scriptural passages cited, viz., 1 Tim. i. and Acts xv., we fail, indeed, to discover in them an actual basis for the specific argument which Luther here presents and endeavors to establish. They carry us, upon the one hand, too far. 1 Tim. i. 9 expresses, also, as Luther himself has already elsewhere observed but does not now stop to note, the "spiritual" abrogation of the Law for the believer as such, inasmuch as with the removal of his sin his subjection to the Law is also terminated. And, on the other hand, it might still be asked, whether the whole Moses should not be nevertheless retained, at least for the mass of merely nominal Christians—for the "rude and unbelieving," or "the Lord Omnes"—and even, also, for true believers, inasmuch as the

rod of the Law is yet, on account of lingering sin, to be applied to them in order to produce a knowledge of sin and repentance. But Luther's proof rests mainly upon the express utterances of Paul concerning the Sabbath and idols.[1] And we find the deepest basis of his argument in his conception of the general and essential relation of man, as a personal, moral spirit, to God. This relation cannot, it appears to him, be absolutely and with externally binding authority determined by ordinances, which aim only at that which is external, bodily and temporal—not by "temporal ceremonies," nor by anything which interferes with conscience and faith. In so far as such ordinances are instituted in the course of unfolding divine revelation, God can have given them only, as is confirmed by the citation from Paul, with special and temporal ends in view, and to that nation to whom He was then speaking through Moses. Whatever He has written upon the heart, however, is binding upon all.

These same principles were soon after expounded in opposition to the "fanatical and turbulent spirits," especially in his *Sermons upon Genesis*.[2] That Moses, even in the precepts of the Decalogue, "does not bind the Gentiles," he there proves from the very words of the Decalogue itself: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt," etc. From this it is clear, he maintains, that the Ten Commandments do not apply to us, since we were certainly never led out of Egypt. He then again appeals to the abrogation of the Sabbath, according to the testimony of Paul. The *Sermons upon Exodus*, delivered at a still earlier date, should be examined also in this connection.[3]

But, even in connection with these decided views, Luther still concedes to the peculiar, positive form of the Law under Moses a certain abiding significance. He declares, for example, that he nowhere else finds the natural laws "so excellently and systematically presented as in Moses," where they are epitomized "better than the Gentiles could ever have done it." "Thus the Ten Commandments are a mirror of our life, in which we may see wherein we lack." He even wished that Christians, although free from Moses, would yet in external, civil matters

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 358.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 9 sqq.

[3] Cf. Erl. Ed., xxxvi, 46 sqq. Also, in the year 1526, Erl. Ed., xxix, 323.

follow his example. But he still continued to maintain that this must be done voluntarily, through the regular agencies within each nation, *i. e.*, through the existing civil authorities; and that the peculiar form in which the proper authorities of any nation see fit to express the common natural law is for the citizens of that nation obligatory.

Before this New Testament conception of the Law, the principles of Iconoclasm are, of course, totally discredited. Even the breaking of idols and altars by the Jews does not imply a justification of similar conduct upon our part, as the former "had at that time a positive commandment of God for that very work, which we do not have in our day." It does not help the case to cry out: "God's Word, God's Word." The question is, whether or no such Word is addressed *to thee*.[1]

In relation to the *Sabbath* or *Sunday*, for the celebration of which Carlstadt had in a similar way, without further justification, asserted the authority of Moses, although interpreting the demands of the latter in a moderate spirit, Luther quotes, in addition to the passages of Paul above referred to, the declaration of Isa. lxvi. 23, that in the New Testament one Sabbath shall follow another, that is, there shall be a daily Sabbath, and no longer any difference between one time and another. He had already before the indulgence controversy taught, in his *Sermons upon the Ten Commandments*,[2] when commenting upon these same passages, that the Sabbath of the old covenant was intended to be a mere figure of that which was to come, and that the Church had retained the festival under the instructions of the divine Word touching the weak. In like manner he had, for example, in the *Sermon von guten Werken* (1520), taught, in accord with the above-cited passages, a spiritual celebration, whereas the bodily observance is no longer required of us by the Law of Moses, but is only yet necessary for the sake of immature believers.

The Fanatics now impel him to more extended and still more definite statements upon the subject—especially in his *Sermons upon Exodus*. The proper spiritual Sabbath consists for him (cf. again the *Sermons upon the Decalogue*) in a celebration by the heart, *i. e.*, that, as Christ lay in the grave and kept Sabbath, so the Old Adam should rest from all his works and desires, and

[1] Briefe, ii, 548. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 18, 36, 46. [2] Vol. I., p. 207.

Christ should, on the contrary, so live in us, that hands and feet, body, soul and thoughts, should become divine, so that whatsoever I do I may be sure that God is doing in me. Under this category Luther includes all the labors of Christians, in so far as they are performed in accordance with divine instructions, and as the former know that such labors are pleasing to God. Every one must be sure of this in his own case. Thus, a servant sweeping the house should "have the assurance that she is keeping the Sabbath properly if she faithfully executes the task assigned her." The especial observance of the particular day, Sunday, should also, in Luther's view, be retained, in connection with the continual Sabbath observance. The basis of this, again, is not found in the Mosaic ordinance, but in a universal, natural appointment. "Nature suggests and teaches that we must sometimes rest for a day, that man and beast may be refreshed." "Although all days are free, and one is like another, yet it is nevertheless good and useful—yea, very necessary—that we rest (keep holiday) on one day, whether it be Sabbath, Sunday, or some other day. For God desires to rule the world in a clean and peaceful way. He has, therefore, given six days for work, but on the seventh day the toilers—yea, even the cattle—should have rest, in order that they may thus find refreshment, and especially that those who have no leisure at other times may attend the preaching of the Word on that day. For such reasons, namely, from love and necessity, Sunday has remained, not on account of the Commandment of Moses, but on account of our need, in order that we might rest and learn the Word of God." Against the view, that we are bound by the Mosaic Law to the observance of the day, Luther advances also the further objection, that we would then have to observe Saturday, and not Sunday; but such celebration is not enjoined in any passage of the New Testament. If he then still designates it as God's own will that we should reserve the seventh day for rest, we can understand this, in harmony with the context, only of such a divine will as is revealed in the existence of a universal natural necessity. Reference is made to Moses in the connection, inasmuch as he also points us back to this general provision. "That which nature suggests and teaches" is, moreover, in Luther's conception, by no means so general and absolutely binding a requirement as the fundamental moral requirements affecting the inner life of man. He suggests it as

possible for one to secure in some other way the needed leisure for the study or hearing of the divine Word; or, again, that some should not stand in need of the rest thus provided for. He even says openly: If the Sabbath is kept for the sake of the rest which it affords, then it is also clear that he who does not need the rest may violate the Sabbath and rest on some other day, as nature may require. He points to Matt. xii. 1 sqq. and Mk. iii 2 sqq., where Christ subordinates the Sabbath to man.[1]

Luther would have the Mosaic Law regarded as an example, also, in the sense above indicated, in its provisions concerning usury and interest. Even in his earlier criticisms and complaints in regard to prevalent practice in the collection of interest,[2] he had appealed, not to any binding Old Testament precept, but to "the natural law and the law of Christian love." He now classes this among the particulars in which it would be well to follow Moses. He means to say that, instead of the modern method of computing interest, it might be collected after the manner of the Mosaic tithes, *i. e.*, instead of a definite, unvarying percentage upon capital loaned, the debtor might be required to pay a tithe of the variable profits realized in any given year from the capital which he has invested in land, cattle, etc. But, while suggesting this, he always repeats the statement, that it is at the option of the rulers of the land and the Emperor to follow this example or not, as they may deem best. Meanwhile, creditors have always full liberty to decide whether or no they will, for the sake of the Gospel, forego their legal rights and abandon the collection of interest; the authoritative law being that of the land, and not the ordinance of Moses.[3] The Mosaic provision, "that no one should sell his land absolutely, but only until the following year of jubilee," appeared to Luther also worthy of careful consideration, as he thought it desirable that property should remain within the relationship. He instances also the requirement of levirate marriage as "an excellent (*fein*) commandment." He approved, likewise, the civil law which God gave to His people for the punishment of stealing.

[1] Op. Ex., Erl. xii, 71 sq. Erl. Ed., xx, 247 sqq.; xxix, 157; xxxvi, 92 sqq.; xxxiii, 10.

[2] Thus in Erl. Ed., xx, 109, 116.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxix, 157; xxxiii, 11. Briefe, ii, 657 sqq.

All these commendatory utterances, however, are to be interpreted in such a way as not to conflict with the principle maintained by Luther in the controversy with Carlstadt. Thus, for example, to the question, how adulterers should be punished, he replied simply, "that the Law of Moses, commanding that they be stoned, was given only to the Jews. We, who have Gentile rulers, are in duty bound to conform our conduct to the law and precepts of the latter.[1]

B. *Defence of the Objectivity of the True Means of Grace and of a Proper Ecclesiastical Order.*

NO CHANGE OF PRINCIPLES—NEW APPLICATION.

Thus did Luther maintain against the new Fanatics the same spiritual principles of Evangelical Christianity which he had been led to espouse in opposition to the Romish system of human ordinances.

The same Spirit and saving grace which assured for him the freedom of the believer from outward works and laws he now regards as bound, in the imparting of salvation to man, to the signs, pledges and means which have been appointed by God for this purpose, but whose validity was denied by these new adversaries. In defending these objective ordinances, he knows himself to be, in so far at least, in accord with the entire body of the Church from its origin, but continues nevertheless his opposition to all the additions which had, here too, been made to the genuine divine ordinances, acknowledging as means of grace only the Word, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It became, therefore, incumbent upon him to define the doctrine of the sacraments, particularly that concerning the Lord's Supper, in many particulars still more accurately.

At the same time, the conflict against the fanatical theories led to a discussion of the entire *ecclesiastical order* to be observed in the application and administration of these means, that no offence might be given to the will of Him who has revealed Himself as a God of peace, propriety and order—and this, also, in direct opposition to the arbitrary subjectivity and presumption of the new prophets. In this direction especially, we shall find

[1] Erl. Ed., xxix, 157; xxxiii, 11 sq. Briefe, ii, 508 sq.; vi, 52 sq.

the Reformer advancing also to new and more precise definitions of his doctrinal views.

Here, as elsewhere, our presentation of the facts in the case must be unprejudiced and purely historical, as we follow the course which Luther himself pursued, proceeding from his original principle, which embraced already a clear recognition of the objectivity now so strongly advocated, but, at the same time, influenced by definite historical circumstances which impelled him chiefly in one direction. It is not our province to proffer dogmatic criticisms upon that course itself. We must, however, from the very outset keep in view, as of the very highest importance, the striking fact (which dogmatic criticism must also particularly observe when treating of the period) that all the elements which Luther found occasion to antagonize in the interest of a true objective mediation of grace met him, from the very beginning, in most intimate combination, in the principles avowed by those whom he was accustomed to describe as "fanatical spirits." We instance the denial of the real presence of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper and the opposition to infant baptism, both of which were found in immediate connection with a low estimate of the external Word, with a perverted view of the believer's fellowship with God, and with the abolition of all ecclesiastical order—indeed, with the attempted destruction of all human and moral order whatsoever. Already, in the case of Carlstadt, he regarded it as "the final purpose" to abolish the entire sacrament and the whole external order instituted by God. Instead of this, he witnessed the attempt of these presumptuous fanatics to substitute this new, wretched, external, human invention: "They make a human work out of that which God ordains as inward faith and spirit: they make an inward spirit out of that which God ordains as an outward word and sign. They go out, therefore, as the devil does, where God wants them to go in, and they go in where God wants them to go out." The result of such a course could only, in his judgment, be that they, while refusing to tolerate anything external, should be "utterly drowned in the flesh."[1] The historical connection thus revealed can alone entirely account for the zeal with which Luther now presents, fortifies and maintains his positions upon every single point of the doctrines involved.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxix, 260, 211; xxx, 136.

Among modern critics, those who fully coincide with the opinions maintained by Luther against the "Fanatics," as well as those who disapprove and lament the position thus taken by him, feel constrained, for the most part, to emphasize as strongly as possible the difference between the principles now announced and those formerly avowed by the Reformer. We have recognized in advance the really new elements furnished by the present historical period for Luther's development and doctrinal completeness. But we must also in advance declare, in view of what has already been observed, that the difference referred to has been, for the most part, greatly exaggerated. Those declarations of the earlier Luther which form the points of attachment for the later utterances are too often overlooked. Consider, for instance, his laudation of the Word in the tract upon *Christian Liberty;* his resolute defence of infant baptism in such a publication as that upon the *Babylonian Captivity*, formulated before any of the perils of the Anabaptist movement had appeared; his persistent maintenance of the true presence of Christ in the sacrament at a time when the denial of it would have seemed to furnish a most powerful weapon against the mass and the Papacy, and one of which no suspicious characters had as yet availed themselves; the order-loving spirit which moved him, in the *Address to the Nobility*, so loudly denounced as "revolutionary," to demand a regular call as a necessary prerequisite for the preaching of the Word, and to summon to the aid of the Reformation itself regular public agencies in the persons of princes and nobles. The closing portion of our review of this period will make abundantly manifest how strikingly his fundamental estimate of the Church was also afterwards maintained intact.

a. *The Means of Grace in General—Particularly the Word.*

GOD DEALS WITH US INTERNALLY—BUT ONLY THROUGH EXTERNAL MEANS.

God, says Luther, deals with us in two ways, *externally and internally*—externally, through the *spoken word* of the Gospel and through *material signs*, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper; internally, through the Holy Spirit and faith, together with other spiritual gifts: and He does so in conformity with the

principle, that the external should and must always precede and the internal follow, the latter being mediated through the former, since He has determined that He will bestow the internal gifts upon no man save through the external. He will not grant the Spirit, nor faith, to any one without the external Word and sign which He has instituted for the purpose, as He says in Lk. xvi. 29: "Let them hear Moses and the prophets." Hence, St. Paul can call baptism a washing of regeneration, in which God richly pours out the Holy Spirit (Tit. iii. 5–7), and the preached Gospel a divine word, which saves all who believe it (Rom. i. 16).[1]

Here, too, he again gives pre-eminence to the Word. Upon this primarily depends for him the entire genuine process of intercourse between God and men, and thus also distinctively salvation itself, as tendered to us from above, and not as an achievement to be attained by effort originating with ourselves. He inquires by what means one may be initiated into the lofty spirit of the Heavenly Prophets. They do not point inquirers to the external Word, but direct them to the fools' paradise, when they say: "Stand still in idle vacuity," etc. They tear away the ladder by means of which the Spirit must come to us. They do not profess to teach how the Spirit may come to us, but how we may come to the Spirit, so that we may learn to walk on the clouds and ride upon the wind.[2]

Although, in the passage just cited, only the Word of the *Gospel* is specifically mentioned, it is clear, from our previous investigations, that the Word of the *Law* as a divinely-appointed means is not excluded. Already in the latter Luther recognizes the effective working of the Holy Spirit. Through it the Holy Spirit is to discharge the punitive functions of His office. It is not, however, able to impart the Spirit to us; this being the distinctive office of the Gospel.[3]

Although maintaining that Word and Spirit must always go together, Luther does not enter into any more detailed statement of the mutual relations of the two. He does not attempt to explain precisely why the Spirit, who refuses to work except through the Word, yet fails to actually effect salvation in all who hear the Word. We have already at an earlier period, when tracing Luther's doctrine of free will, quoted the proposition

[1] Erl. Ed., xxix, 208. [2] Ibid., p. 209 sq. [3] Ibid., p. 212.

which we now find again in his publication against the Prophets, *i. e.:* In the Word the Spirit comes, and gives faith, *where and to whom* He will. This same proposition recurs not only in the *Marburg Articles*, but also, in 1529, in the *Schwabach Articles*.[1]

b. *Infant Baptism and Baptism in General.*

FAITH OF PARENTS OR SPONSORS—INFANT BAPTISM ENDORSED BY THE CHURCH—CHILDREN HAVE FAITH—DIVINE AUTHORITY—OBJECTIVE VALIDITY—ANABAPTISM—ZWINGLI AND BUCER.

In the discussions of the sacrament of regeneration by the Reformer, the question of infant baptism was, in consequence of the assaults of the Anabaptists, kept in the foreground.

Luther, as observed above,[2] was by no means astonished when the Zwickau prophets began to assail this ordinance; and the theory with which he proposed to meet and repel the attack was, in its chief features, none other than that which he had already advanced in 1520.[3] We must infer that, at the time when he formulated this theory for himself and substituted it for the traditional one, the objections which might be urged against infant baptism in general had suggested themselves to his own mind and been satisfactorily answered. He could now, therefore, regard them without dismay when presented by others.

Upon learning, through the sorely agitated Melanchthon, of the protest of the Zwickau agitators against infant baptism, Luther immediately replied (January 13, 1522), laying all stress again in his counter-argument upon the faith of those who prayerfully present the children for baptism. The promise of Christ, in Matt. xviii. 19, he declares, stands immovable. Christ never repelled any one who was brought to Him upon the faith of others. For this, we have the testimony and examples of the whole Scriptures. Everything is possible to him that believeth.

Luther then takes up the question, whether it is really the teaching of the Church that faith is thus infused into children. He does not at this point wish to decide whether the faith or doctrine of the Church at large is itself, as such, an evidence for

[1] Erl. Ed., xxix, 212; lxv, 90; xxiv, 325.
[2] Vol. I., p. 442. [3] Ibid., p. 399 sq.

the truthfulness of the position held (upon this point, see below), but, for the present, he merely seeks to show that the Church at large really holds this view. Being as yet but imperfectly informed as to the arguments presented by the objectors of Zwickau, he presumes that the controversy may perhaps in this way involve the Church and its relation to the question. He, accordingly, appeals to the confession of the entire Church, in which this doctrine is acknowledged; and he regards it as a remarkable divine miracle, that this single article, of infant baptism, has never been denied even by heretics. If one should refuse to acknowledge that this is a part of the confession of the true Church, he must refuse to acknowledge the Church itself; for the Church has always confessed what she believed. He had already had occasion to meet the objection, that children do not believe. But how, had he inquired, is this proved? By the fact that they do not yet show their faith? Neither could we, then, be Christians when we are asleep! Cannot God preserve faith in children during the whole period of their infancy (*infantia*) just as He preserves it in us during protracted slumber?

After again appealing to the fact, that candidates for baptism are offered to the Christ present at the ceremony, and that He has, in every recorded instance, accepted that which was thus offered, he again asks: Why then should we doubt? We have robbed the Heavenly Prophets, says he, of their evidence, since they have no instances nor testimonies to refer to, but we have both. If they maintain that, according to Mk. xvi. 16, we must first *believe* and then be baptized, he demands that they prove from some other source than this passage, which does not imply it, their supposition of the non-faith of children—a demand with which they are unable to comply. He adds: "Whatever, therefore, is not contrary to the Scriptures, is for the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are for it." This declaration must, of course, be interpreted in the light of the context. It is not an arbitrary opinion, nor an article of faith resting upon mere tradition, which is thus proved to be "not contrary to the Scriptures," but a doctrine which, although not directly expressed in the Scriptures, yet depends upon the promises of God granted to faith. and upon the examples recorded.[1] He cites further, in illustra-

[1] This utterance of Luther is very inaccurately cited by Schenkel in his Wesen des Protestantismus, 2d Ed., p. 45 sqq.

tion, the Old Testament ordinance of circumcision, claiming that the arguments of the Anabaptists would compel them to maintain that the children of the Jews had not the faith of Abraham, and could, therefore, not receive the sign of that faith.

He calls the particular attention of Melanchthon to the utterance of Paul concerning the sanctity of the children of Christian parents (1 Cor. vii. 14), and asks for his opinion in regard to it. He would like to use this passage to prove that, in the practice of the apostles, children were baptized.[1]

In writing to Spalatin in May, 1522, Luther gives briefly further expression of his views. To the question, whether children can have faith although not manifesting it, he replies as in the letter to Melanchthon. The devil, he holds, is to be driven out of the children by means of the Word of God accompanying the prayer of the Church, which Word, according to Isa. lv., does not proceed in vain from the mouth of God. He finds no difference between the conversion of a child and that of an adult by the Word of God, except that in the case of the latter—in his reason, his own wisdom, etc.—there is more rebellion against the saving power of the Word. Thus he is led again to the thought expressed already in his *Commentary on Galatians*, *i. e.*, the greater susceptibility distinguishing childhood.[2] He then repeats his appeal to the circumcision of children under the old covenant, adding now, as evidence that Jewish infants were not really without faith and hence circumcised in vain, the assertion of Christ in Matt. xix., 14: "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and observing, by way of comment, that the kingdom of heaven can belong only to the believing. "If, now," he asks, "the kingdom of heaven became their portion through circumcision, why can it not be imparted also through baptism, especially since we have here, in addition, the sanctification through the Word and through the prayer and the faith of the Church, presenting the children to Christ with the petition that He may lay His hands upon them and pray for them." It is in this way that Luther here introduces into the discussion this scriptural passage, which henceforth becomes a chief support of the doctrine of infant baptism.[3]

But these first replies, addressed to friends of the Reformer,

[1] Briefe, ii, 126 sqq. [2] Cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 399 sq. [3] Briefe, ii, 202.

afford us merely fragmentary arguments. The fundamental principles underlying the doctrine are, indeed, firmly established in the mind of Luther. But upon some separate points, as is shown in his letter to Melanchthon, he is as yet himself endeavoring to gain clearer convictions. He now, for the first time, fully develops the complete theory which harmonizes and binds together his views upon the subject. This theory he then presents in his writings, especially in the portion of the *Church Postils* which he was then engaged in preparing, viz., in the *Sermon upon the Third Sunday after Epiphany*.[1] He himself afterwards refers to this exposition of the subject in his tract of the year 1528, entitled: *Von der Wiedertaufe, an zwei Pfarrherrn*.[2]

In this *Sermon* he, first of all, expresses his purpose to "let the foundation stand firm and sure, that no one can be saved through the faith of others, but through his own." We must suffer the whole world to perish rather than surrender this principle. With reference to the sacraments, he persists in his opposition to the lying doctrine, that one who receives the sacrament without faith receives grace and the forgiveness of sins. He repeats the Augustinian maxim: "Not the sacrament, but the faith of the sacrament, justifies." He declares most positively: "Baptism helps no one, and is to be granted to no one, unless he believe for himself."

He accordingly pronounces a mere "dream" the traditional opinion, that children receive grace, without faith, merely through the power of baptism. Even the holy ancient Fathers speak "not clearly enough" for him, when they affirm that young children are baptized in the faith of the Christian Church. They do not thoroughly explain *how* this faith benefits the children—whether they receive through it a faith of their own, or whether (as the Sophists interpret it) they are baptized, without faith of their own, upon the faith of the Church.

He rejects also, on the other hand, the evasion of those who hold that children are baptized *upon the future faith* which they will exercise when they attain to years of discretion. This conception he had met with in the writings of the Bohemian Brethren, and had already antagonized it in his publication of the year

[1] Erl. Ed., xi, 58 sqq. [2] Erl. Ed., xxvi, 255.

1523, designed especially for their instruction, *Vom Anbeten des Sacraments*, etc.[1] He repeats here again: "Faith must be present before, or at least in, baptism; otherwise, the child is not released from the devil and sin."

Just as little will he allow the distinction between the kingdom of heaven, as the Christian Church and the Gospel—and that kingdom as eternal life, in accordance with which children are supposed to be baptized into the kingdom of heaven, not in the latter, but merely in the former sense of the term, *i. e.*, "merely taken up into Christendom and brought to the Gospel." These notions, he declares, are all framed out of man's own imagination.

In general, he is utterly unable to see in a baptism which is not to effect and grant to children the same benefits which it confers upon adults the same baptism, or, indeed, any baptism at all, but only "a sport and mockery of baptism"; for there is no baptism except that which saves.

Luther's own solution of the problem is the same as in his earlier publications. He indicates its nature in the above-cited comment upon the expressions of the Fathers, viz.: The question is, *how* the faith of the Church benefits the children. His propositions are as follows: Children in baptism have faith of their own, which God Himself effects in them through the petition and presentation of the sponsors in the name of the Christian Church. The children are not baptized in the faith of the sponsors, nor in that of the Church, but the faith of the sponsors and of the Church petitions in their behalf and secures for them a faith of their own, in which they are baptized.

The ruler of Capernaum, who by his petition secured for his servant the gift of health, serves as an example of the method here described, the narrative of this incident forming the text of the *Sermon* before us. Afterwards, in the *Sermon* in the *Church Postils*, delivered on the *Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity*, Luther makes use again of the account of the paralytic who was brought by others, with believing entreaty, to the Saviour.[2]

Very special emphasis is now laid upon the passages, Matt. xix. 13–15; Mk. x. 13–16; Luke xviii. 15, 16. These are for Luther "strong and firm utterances," which "no one shall take from us." He now applies them, too, in such a way as to indicate

[1] Erl. Ed., xxviii, 416. [2] Ibid., xiv, 171 sq. Cf. Vol. I., p. 400.

that faith is bestowed upon children in the very act of baptism. Christ, he affirms, is present in baptism as truly as He was then present. According to His word, "Suffer the children," etc., it must be right and Christian to bring children to Him, which can be done in no other way than in baptism. It must be certain, also, that He blesses them and gives them the kingdom of heaven, which cannot be unless they have personal faith. The piety and faith of those who bring them may, indeed, help them to secure such faith, they being presented by means of the faith and effort of others; but when they have been brought, and the priest or administrant deals with them in Christ's stead, *He* blesses them and gives them faith and the kingdom of heaven; for the words and acts of the priest are the words and deeds of Christ Himself. From this it is evident that the awakening of faith in children and the bestowal of the salvation, or kingdom of heaven, which is dependent upon such awakening are in Luther's conception inseparably connected.

In support of the position, that the apostles already baptized children and regarded them as believers, he now appeals to the words of 1 John ii. 13: "I write unto you, children," etc. John, says he, there speaks of such as are younger than the youth already mentioned, *i. e.*, of those under fifteen or eighteen years of age, and excepts none from that point downward to the first year of life. The apostles, therefore, held in regard to such, that "they believe and know the Father, just as though they had attained years of discretion and were able to read."

The objection based on the supposed incapacity of little children for the exercise of faith is now more definitely stated, as follows: Faith, according to Rom x. 17, cometh by hearing; but children, not having arrived at the years of discretion, cannot hear the Word of God. In meeting this, Luther avails himself of his closer definition of reason, as the substance (content) of the thinking, planning and striving in the natural man, in order to turn the immaturity of this endowment into an argument *in behalf of* infant baptism. He locates the "rebellion" (*vid.*, p. 47) of the depraved nature in the reason. This is just the power that most stoutly resists the Word of God, so that no one can come to God without first dying to reason, becoming even "as unreasonable and unintelligent as any young child." He then argues directly: "Just because they are without reason, they are better adapted

for faith than old and rational persons, with whom reason is always standing in the way and will not stoop to pass her lofty head through the strait gate." Just at this point he claims the fullest recognition for his fundamental principle, that, at all events, God alone works our salvation: "Here God alone works, and reason is dead, blind and opposed to this work, like an irrational block. * * * Faith in God's Word is the work of God alone and beyond all the power of reason, and to Him the child is just as near as the adult—yea, much nearer." It "strikes" him, therefore, "that if any baptism can be certain, that of children must be the most certain of all, in view of the Word of Christ in which He bids them to be brought to Him. The old come of themselves, and in them there may be deceit in consequence of their mature reason, whereas in children, on account of their yet undeveloped (hidden) reason, there can be no deception, and in them Christ makes effectual (*wirket*) His blessing, as He has bidden them to be brought to Him." He again directs attention to the condition of the believer in sleep, in which the latter is never left without faith and the grace of God—and, still further, to other conditions, as in the midst of labors and worldly business, when the believer is not constantly thinking of faith or of reason, while yet his faith has not ceased to exist. He meets the objection based upon the necessity for a *hearing of the Word* (Rom. x.) by maintaining that it is only the *intelligent* hearing which is lacking in the case of children, whereas they have the spiritual hearing: in baptism they hear the Gospel—hear it, indeed, only once, but so much the more impressively because Christ, who commanded them to be brought to Him, now receives them. Luther does not, as we observe, enter upon a discussion of the question, what is really the psychological nature of faith and of a spiritual hearing of the Word, or, indeed, of any mental and religious exercise. We should be satisfied, he insists, with the invitation and assurance of the Lord, *i. e.*, that we should suffer the children to come, etc.,—and to this he constantly returns. "Leave (the question of) their faith to Him who bids you bring them to Him, and say: Upon this I depend." "Isaiah lv. 9 says: My ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." "The works of God are secret, where and when He will."

Luther, as already observed, in his tract, *Von der Wiedertaufe*,

addressed to two pastors in the year 1528,[1] refers the reader to his *Church Postils*, from which we have gleaned the above extracts.

In the former publication, he has gathered, together with the passage in Matt. xix. 14, a number of further scriptural testimonies in support of the proposition, that children may believe, even though they have as yet no reasoning power. Thus, the blood of the children, in Ps. cvi. 38, is called "innocent," although they certainly could not be pure without the Spirit and faith. He now lays especial emphasis upon the testimony concerning John the Baptist, while he was yet in his mother's womb. In this child, he argues, faith must surely have been already present (when he leaped at the coming of Mary): hence it follows, that there may be faith even in little children. And it cannot now be denied that the very same Christ who there, while yet in the womb of Mary, came to John is present at baptism and in baptism. He speaks here through the mouth of the priest, as there through the mouth of His mother. Why should not, therefore, through His speaking and His baptism, the Spirit and faith here enter into children as there into John? Luther still firmly maintains that the baptism of children is the most secure of all, because a child cannot deceive, and because it comes to Christ as did John and as did the children who were brought to Him as recorded in Matt. xix.

He now discusses more distinctly than in the passages hitherto cited the question, whether Christ has actually commanded the baptism of children. To those who profess themselves unable to find any utterances or examples in its favor in the New Testament, he replies, that Christ has not given command to baptize adult persons, or men or women as such, but only, in general terms, all nations (Matt. xxviii. 19): but children form a large portion of the nations. He cites, further, examples from the Acts and the writings of Paul (1 Cor. i. 16), in which the baptism of entire households is spoken of. He also draws an argument again from 1 John ii. 13.

The sign of the ancient covenant, circumcision, is then also adduced. He assumes that God has now made His covenant with all nations through the Gospel, and has appointed baptism as its sign. Who, he asks, can then exclude the children? If

[1] Erl. Ed., xxvi, 254–294.

the old covenant and its sign, circumcision, made the children of Abraham *believing* and people of God, much more must the new covenant and its sign have such power, and make those who accept it the people of God; and it is to be accepted, according to the commandment of God, by the whole world.

We must note, also, with special care the argument of Luther based upon the fact that God had, as a matter of history, allowed infant baptism to stand up to that time unchallenged in the Church, and had thus granted it gracious recognition (cf. *supra*, in the letter to Melanchthon). He here emphasizes three points. First: No heresy has ever maintained its place perpetually, but only for a little while at most. Thus, also, if infant baptism had been wrong, God would not have upheld it so long, even as He has kept the Bible, the Lord's Prayer and the Children's Creed (*i. e.*, the Apostles'). This divine miracle indicates, therefore, that infant baptism must be right. Where we see a work of God we must believe, just as well as when we hear His Word, unless, indeed, the Scriptures designate such work as one which we are to avoid. An example of the latter kind is seen in the Papacy, which, since the Scriptures are arrayed against it, is to be regarded as a work of God indeed, but not as a work of grace, but a work of wrath, which is to be avoided. Neither has the Papacy ever been, like the Bible and infant baptism, accepted by *all* Christians in the *whole world*. Secondly: God bears testimony in behalf of infant baptism through the great and sacred gifts with which He has endowed, and still endows, many Christians baptized in infancy, without requiring a repetition of their baptism. But God never by His acts opposes Himself. He will not, by the bestowal of His gifts, sanction disobedience to His command. The argument here is similar to that in which the apostle, in Acts xv. 8, 9, from the fact that God granted the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles (without an acceptance of the Law upon their part), inferred that the Gentiles are not bound to the Law of Moses. Thirdly: If infant baptism were not right, it would follow that in all this time there has been no baptism, and hence also no Christendom; for Christendom must, in order to exist at all, be subject to Christ and have His Word, His baptism, His sacrament.

In the course of the above argument, we are struck with the fact that the same Luther who so boldly entered the conflict with ancient traditions in the interest of evangelical truth now himself,

in resisting a professedly reformatory and evangelical tendency, appeals for support to the *antiquity of a tradition*.[1] He now, however, grants the validity of such a tradition, not merely because it has been preserved by human hierarchical agencies appointed by God, nor because it is accepted by the great mass of believers in Christendom; but upon the ground that, among *all* Christians, and therefore among those in whom the Spirit of God really dwelt, no opposition to it had ever arisen, and because, therefore, if it were really against the mind of Christ, the very existence of such a congregation of believers in Christ would be assailed. That a Church of Christ does really exist, and has always existed, is, at all events, for him a fundamental article of faith, resting upon the promise of Christ. The only possible question for him in this instance would have been, whether an error in regard to the ordinance of baptism would have been really irreconcilable with the continued existence of an otherwise Christian spirit, faith and life.

But the chief stress was laid by Luther upon the second of the arguments quoted, in connection with the third—as is manifest especially from an examination of his *Larger Catechism*.[2] He here again explains: That infant baptism is pleasing to God is sufficiently proved by His own work, *i. e.*, by His making so many of the baptized holy, giving them His Spirit, etc. This God would not do, if He did not accept the baptism of children. Yea, otherwise there would now for a long time have been no Christian at all on earth. "This," says the Catechism, "is almost the best and strongest method of proof for the simple and unlearned; for no one shall ever take from us, nor overthrow, this article of our Creed: I believe in a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints," etc.

In this document, Luther insists with peculiar emphasis upon the *objective validity* which attaches to the sacrament of baptism in and of itself, even *apart from the faith* of the recipient. This brings into view for the first time the full significance of the sacrament and means of grace as such. Here, again, we must recall attention to his earlier and distinctly expressed theory. He now discriminates yet more definitely between the significance which attaches to *baptism in itself*, by virtue of the Word of Christ,

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 506.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxi, 136.

and that which attaches to the *faith of the recipient*, although we have learned from previous representations how necessary is this very faith to a true and fruitful *appropriation* of that which *baptism in itself* includes and brings with it.

Luther guards carefully against the error of making the believer's own faith the real ground of his hope of salvation. Faith must, it is true, be exercised in baptism, but no one is to be baptized on (the ground of) his faith. It is one thing to have faith, and quite another thing to depend upon one's faith, and thus be baptized upon it. It is, much rather, the firm ground of our baptism, that God has made a covenant and instituted baptism as its sign. We receive baptism, therefore, not because we are sure that we possess faith, but because He desires us to receive it. He who is baptized upon (the ground of) his faith, builds upon something which is his own, and not upon God's Word alone. Man's faith, moreover, is variable; there is ever something lacking in it, something yet to be learned: the commandment of God, on the contrary, cannot deceive; His Word stands sure forever. Yea, says Luther, when one is baptized upon the word and commandment of God, even though he had no faith and his baptism could hence be of no benefit to him, yet would the baptism itself be "right and sure"—just as the Gospel remains a right Gospel, even though it does not benefit the unbelieving hearer.

The Anabaptists, he maintains, dare not, according to their own principles, baptize, until they know assuredly that the candidate has faith. But how shall they know this? Even the candidate himself is not so certain of his faith. Should one who has been re-baptized be assailed by temptations to doubt, and be convinced that, although he did not rightly believe yesterday, he to-day possesses true faith, he would always in such case have to repeat his baptism.

Even though it be granted that children are without faith, Luther argues that it would not be necessary to repeat baptism. It would then be in itself a proper baptism, but merely improperly received. There would be no occasion, in that case, to renew the baptism, but only to remedy that which had been wrong in it. We might apply in such an instance the maxim: The abuse of a thing does not destroy, but confirms, its proper character (*substantiam*). Should faith come years after the baptism, baptism would then have what properly belongs to it. The *Larger*

Catechism expresses the same idea: Gold, it declares, does not the less remain gold, though it be worn by a harlot in her sin and shame.

Luther had also to combat the idea of the Anabaptists, that the faith of the administrant has something to do with the efficacy or validity of baptism. He here goes so far as to declare: "It is in some measure fraught with greater danger when God gives His Word through holy persons than when He gives it through those who are unholy, since unreasoning people are misled by this, and cling more to the holiness of men than to the Word of God."

As the underlying impelling power of the entire Anabaptist movement, however, he recognized again the "work-devil," against which he had so long been contending. The latter professes to exalt faith, but he means thereby works, and leads the poor people to place their confidence in works. They are taught, by the theory of these deceivers, to place their confidence in the supposed fact, that, if they have been baptized as is now required by the latter, they have done something right and good. They, in truth, make no account at all of faith, but boast of it only for the sake of appearance. This is really, therefore, a genuine master-piece of the devil's cunning, to drive Christian people from the *righteousness of faith* back upon the *righteousness of works*.

Thus we see the doctrine of Luther upon infant baptism, and upon the objective character of baptism in general, brought to its full and definite development under the historical influences whose character has been briefly indicated.

Even Zwingli's doctrine appeared to him to seriously imperil the proper recognition of the sacrament of baptism. Indeed, in the tract upon Anabaptism, after all that he has said concerning the emptiness of the theory, he finally adds, that the error of the Anabaptists is, in this particular, more endurable than that of the "Sacramentarians," since the latter reduce baptism to nothing at all, whereas the former fashion it into a new form. There was, however, no thorough-going discussion of the subject with Zwingli. Luther charged him with holding the view, that baptism is merely a sign of the confession of faith upon the part of the recipient, whereas the Anabaptists spoke, at least, of a divine impartation communicated through baptism and presupposing the existence

of faith. But at Marburg, in 1529, Zwingli and his associates joined with Luther in the acceptance of the proposition, that baptism, resting upon the command and promise of God, "is not merely an empty sign and watchword among Christians, but a sign and work of God, in which our faith is promoted, and through which we are born again." In the fact that faith, without which, indeed, for Luther as well as for Zwingli, regeneration is impossible and baptism fruitless, is here so impressively emphasized and described directly as that through which men are regenerated, we trace, upon Luther's side, a result of his effort to harmonize as far as possible with the Swiss theologians, without discovering any indication of wavering in the maintenance of his own view as to the objectivity of the sacrament. In his own presentation of the doctrine, *i. e.*, in the *Schwabach Articles* drawn up immediately afterward, the emphasis was laid but the more strongly by Luther and his fellow-laborers upon the sacrament as such, as consisting in the water and the Word of God; it was declared to be, by virtue of such Word, a living and powerful thing; and only in the *Conclusion*, after the citation of Matt. xxviii. 19 and Mk. xvi. 16, are added the words: "here one must believe." [1]

In the dialogue at Wittenberg, in 1536, the question of the faith of children at baptism, in regard to which the *Marburg Articles* had given no deliverance, was discussed by Luther and Bucer. The latter acknowledged freely that regeneration and sonship are granted to children, and that the Holy Spirit works in them, just as in the case of John the Baptist while yet in his mother's womb. But he was not able to agree with Luther, that the recipients of baptism already apprehend the words of the Gospel, believe in the act of baptism, and thereby are saved. He was willing to grant faith in children only if faith be understood, in a wider sense, of every divine inbreathing. Luther, on the other hand, maintained that there is really already a beginning of faith in children, even though it be in a peculiar way, unknown to us. He pointed again to the existence of faith in believers during sleep. He was here again influenced, as Seckendorf in his report of the proceedings not incorrectly remarks, directly by his anxiety that salvation should not appear to be

[1] Erl. Ed., lxv, 90; xxiv, 326.

imparted, without the necessary subjective means of appropriation, through the mere work and office of the Church, of which Bucer spoke. As to the way in which this means of appropriation is itself implanted in the recipient of baptism, he adheres to the statements previously elaborated.[1]

c. *The Lord's Supper.*

aa. Opposition to the Denial of the Bodily Presence before the Announcement of Carlstadt's Theory.

VIEWS OF BOHEMIAN BRETHREN—ZWINGLI FOLLOWING HONIUS—POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF LUTHER—NATURAL SENSE OF WORDS—NATURAL BODY VS. SIGN OF SPIRITUAL BODY—BODY AND BREAD—PRIMARY IMPORTANCE OF WORD.

It was only at the close of the year 1523, and during the year 1524, that Carlstadt publicly advocated his theory of the Lord's Supper, which condemned the Lutheran view, no less than that of the Roman Catholic Church, as unevangelical and unspiritual. The resistance of this assault marks the beginning of that great series of doctrinal writings in which Luther connectedly and fully explained and fortified his view in opposition to tendencies which, though born of the Reformation itself, now broke away from the original path.

He had, however, even before this time, had occasion to justify, as against opponents of the Romish Church, the view of the presence of the body of Christ which he had already presented in his treatise upon the *Babylonian Captivity*. He had to deal, in this instance, with opponents of the Papacy and tradition whose spirit was by no means so repulsive to him as was that of Carlstadt and his followers—with whom, on the contrary, he desired to stand in relations of sincere love and doctrinal unity. We refer to the BOHEMIAN BRETHREN, commonly called by Luther Waldenses, or Picards. We must now recur to his deliverances in opposition to their views.

Paul Speratus, who had been called as an evangelical preacher to Iglau, in Moravia, had sent to Luther reports concerning the

[1] Walch, xvii, 2557–59. Seckendorf, Hist. Lutheran., Vol. III., p. 131.

Brethren, and a request for his opinion in regard to some of their teachings. Luther's first reply to him is dated May 16, 1522. The immediate question discussed was, whether the sacrament of the altar is to be worshiped, a custom which gave offence to the Brethren. But Speratus further reported, that he found among them also, as it appeared to him, the opinion that the bread and wine are a "bare representation" (*blosse Bedeutung*) of the body and blood of Christ. Luther now sought to gain further information from certain delegates who had been sent to him by the Brethren. He also received two doctrinal treatises from their Senior, Lucas. He thus reached the conclusion: They believe that the bread is truly and really the body of Christ, although His body and blood are here present not in the same form as in heaven (nor in the same way as Christ in the spirits of men). In a later letter (July 4), he writes that he sees nothing false in their teaching concerning the Eucharist, provided they are not juggling with their words. They commonly employ, says he, obscure and barbarous expressions instead of the language of Scripture. Later still, in 1523, he reports, as the theory which he finds prevalent among them: They think that Christ is under the bread (*sub pane*), not corporeally (as some say that they have seen there the blood and the diminutive form of Christ, etc.), but spiritually and sacramentally—that is, he who receives the bread visibly truly receives naturally, but invisibly, the blood of Him who sitteth at the right hand of the Father. Hence, also, they oppose the adoration of the host, teaching that what is there present, not visibly, but invisibly, is at the right hand of the Father.[1]

We are here not especially concerned to discover what was the real and original opinion of the Bohemian Brethren. It is enough for us to know what were the views which Luther attributed to them, and in refutation of which he felt himself called upon to develop and fortify his own theory. It cannot surprise us, that he found their language obscure. This was but a natural result of their attempt, despite all the divergences of their theory (which was very strongly influenced by that of Wickliffe)[2] from

[1] Briefe, vi, 33; ii, 217, 430. Cf. also, for relations of Luther to the Brethren, the article: "Böhmen und Mähren," by Gindely, in Zeitalter der Reformation, 1857, Vol. I., p. 188 sqq.

[2] Cf. Böhringer, Die Kirche Christi, Vol. I., pp. 340–377: Die Vorreformatoren—Johann von Wyklifle.

that sanctioned by the Church, still to avoid, as far as possible, laying themselves open to the charge of denying the presence of the body altogether. Of this peculiarity we have abundant evidence in the numerous confessions and defences which they published, even before they had felt the influence of the German Reformation. A number of further points also, which are touched upon in Luther's *Vom Anbeten des Sacraments*, are here brought into view. Whilst rejecting the scholastic doctrine of a transformation of the substance, they declare that, with the words of consecration, there is immediately present the body of Christ, given for us, and His blood, and even that the bread is the true (*verum*) *natural* body of Christ, taken (*sumtum*) from the most pure virgin, etc.; and that Christ is thus present sacramentally. But with this statement they immediately combine the further specification, that He is here *spiritually*, adding also, by way of caution, that He is here in another mode of existence (*per aliam existentiam*) than at the right hand of God. He is not here personally, with the natural *substance* (*substantia*) of His body. In this sense, He will not be present upon earth until the Day of Judgment. With this actual substance of His body He has *but one place*, namely, that to which He ascended before the eyes of His disciples. Christ, with His natural body, is not here "abiding actually and corporeally" (*mansione existenter et corporaliter*). Evidently, the meaning of these writers is only that the body is present on earth in a spiritual (*geistiger*) energy, which emanates from Christ, and which the believer enjoys in a peculiar way in the sacrament. The stress is laid upon the idea, that Christ is present "spiritually, efficaciously, potently, in energy" (*spiritualiter, efficaciter, potenter, in virtute*). Yet, upon the other hand, they always expressly disavowed fellowship with those who regarded the Supper as a bare memorial feast, or the bread as merely "figuratively" the body of Christ dwelling in heaven. It is to be observed, however, that they also declare that "the bread is at the same time spiritual flesh and the wine spiritual blood, namely, the unity of the Church" (*quod est unitas ecclesiae*), with appeal to 1 Cor. x. 16. Adoration is denied to the sacrament, because it belongs only to Christ as He is seated at the right hand of God. They demand of their opponents, why they do not worship Christ in the person of believers just as well, at least, as in the sacrament, since He dwells within

them constantly, whereas He is present in the sacrament only occasionally.[1]

Luther, at all events, gave their utterances as kind a reception and as favorable an interpretation as was, from his point of view, possible: and he did so notwithstanding the fact that he, at the same time, not only most strenuously combated, from the very outset, the general attitude toward the means of grace assumed by the New Prophets, but was compelled to witness also the ominous appearance of an interpretation of the words of institution which he found it necessary to antagonize especially in the utterances of Zwingli. The fundamental difference, however, which is to be observed between the doctrine of the Brethren and the views of Carlstadt and Zwingli, and which undoubtedly furnishes the chief explanation of the different attitude of Luther toward the two, lies in the fact, that among the former the chief thing in the sacrament was held to be the reception of an objective, divine gift, whereas among the followers of the latter the sacrament was viewed as essentially a religious transaction on the part of man. This makes it but so much the more significant for us that the Brethren should nevertheless have appeared to him to

[1] Cf. in Balth. Lydius, Waldensia, Roterod., 1616, Sect. II.; Confessio fidei fratrum, A. D. 1504; Oratorio Excusatoria, etc., 1507; further, especially the Excusatio—contra literas D. Augustini, and extract from a letter of the Brethren, of early date, addressed to the Archbishop of Prague, Rockyczana, in the Apologia of A. D. 1538. John Lasicius, De origine et rebus adversis fratrum Bohemorum (according to a MS. preserved at Herrnhut) reports in his Bk. III., Sect. 69: When sending their defensive writings to the King of Hungary, they, at the same time, declared also in a synod that the bread is the body of Christ "sacramentaliter, spiritualiter, potenter et vere." At a synod in 1518, they again scrutinized these propositions, and then sent them also to Luther. In his further record of the declarations of the Brethren, Lasicius appears to be not entirely trustworthy, since he accepted modifications made by the Moravian bishop, Turnowsky, not in the interest of historical accuracy, but for apologetic purposes. We call attention, further, to the fact that, although the Brethren had after 1524 for a considerable time abandoned their correspondence with Luther, they yet solemnly rejected the Zwinglian doctrine of the Lord's Supper which Johann Cizek, a former Breslau monk who appeared among them in 1525, sought to disseminate, and finally drove Cizek himself from their midst, besides publishing a number of controversial writings against the Zwinglians (Gindely, p. 191 sqq). On the other hand, it may be easily understood, from an examination of their thesis above quoted touching the Lord's Supper, why they afterwards placed themselves in closer relations with Calvinism.

be so sorely in need of instruction as is indicated by the contents of his treatise, *Vom Anbeten des Sacraments*.

Moreover, as already stated, the view which Zwingli afterward accepted had at that time already been advocated upon the territory of the Reformation and brought to the notice of Luther. Already in 1522 (in the summer of that year, at the latest; probably not as early as 1521),[1] the letter of the Hollander, Hoen, or Honius, had been received, in which the latter, with Luther, acknowledged the sacrament as a promise and pledge of the forgiveness of sins, compared it to the ring presented by a bridegroom to his bride, and demanded from the recipient the faith that Christ, the Bridegroom, belongs to us—yet, with all, denied the bodily presence of Christ in the Supper. He quoted, as against the belief in such a presence, the prohibition of Matt. xxiv. 23 against crying: "Here is Christ, there is Christ." He acknowledged in the reception of the Supper only a spiritual relation to Christ. He even declared the *est* of the words of institution to be equivalent to *significat*, the expression being similar to that in which Christ is, in Matt. xvi. 18 and 1 Cor. x. 4, called the Rock. Although he is thus, in his exegesis, a forerunner of Zwingli, in other respects the bestowal of a gift upon the part of Christ still appears for him the central point of the sacrament.[1]

Thus Luther was now compelled, for the first time, and that, too, in opposition to tendencies which challenged his sympathy, not only on account of their opposition to Rome, but on account also of the positive evangelical interest which they displayed, to mark out a clear line of discrimination between his teaching and a theory of the Lord's Supper which rejected not only the doctrine of transubstantiation, which he had himself opposed, but also the entire doctrine of a bodily presence, which he had up to this time continued to maintain.

But here, as in earlier emergencies, he assumed at once a most positive attitude.

Afterwards, in 1524, he confessed to the adherents of his cause in Strassburg,[2] that "if Dr. Carlstadt or any one else could have assured me five years ago that there is nothing in the sacrament

[1] Cf. Dieckhoff, l. c., p. 77 sqq.

[2] Briefe, ii, 577.

but bread and wine, he would have done me a great service. I had at that time to withstand such sore temptations, restraining and conquering myself, that I would gladly have escaped, since I saw very well that I with such an argument could have given the Papacy a tremendous thump; and I had two friends, also, who wrote to me about it more skilfully than Dr. Carlstadt." But, even in those earlier years, there was never a trace in his writings of any inward leaning towards that side of the controversy. We have seen how, with all his insistence upon faith and, in general, upon a proper spiritual attitude in the reception of the divine sacramental gift, he yet attached himself, at first, to the traditional doctrine of transubstantiation, and then, proceeding immediately from this position, advanced to his own theory of the presence of the body in the bread. He must have already felt what he afterwards describes in the above letter: "But," says he, "I am held in bondage and cannot escape; the text stands here too strong." The result was that, as others actually went to greater lengths in the question concerning the Lord's Supper, just as in that relating to infant baptism, Luther simply maintained in opposition those doctrines whose fundamental principles had before the rise of the mooted questions been firmly and independently established in his own mind; and he did so, furthermore, with a positiveness which seemed to indicate that the counter-arguments now advanced had in them essentially nothing new of sufficient weight to make any impression upon him. Indeed, his expositions have, in this instance, from the very beginning, even in their minor specifications, a still firmer tone of assurance than his first utterances against the Anabaptists.

Of significance, as related to his previous as well as to his future point of view, is, at the outset, his first reply to Speratus, in which he affirms that that opinion of the Brethren is, as *he* understands it, "not very unlike the truth": but he would like to see "that men would not trouble themselves greatly about these things, but *directly and implicitly believe* that in the sacrament of the altar the body (*Leichnam*) and blood of Christ are truthfully present; and that we should not inquire further how or in what form they are present, since Christ has not told us especially anything about that." His principle is, that we should abide simply by the words given in the Scriptures.

In the year 1523, he addressed to the Brethren his treatise, *Vom*

Anbeten des Sacraments des heiligen Leichnams Christi.[1] He refers in the *Introduction* to a little book of the Brethren for the instruction of children, composed in the German and Bohemian languages, which teaches "that Christ is in the sacrament not independently or naturally (cf. *supra: cum naturali substantia*), and also that the sacrament is not to be adored." The book in question was a catechism composed by the Senior, Lucas.

He then proposes to consider, how "so many frivolous spirits have taken offence" at Christ's words of institution, upon which everything depends (cf. p. 69). He does not further designate the parties whom he has in mind; but the section following leads the reader naturally to think of the interpretation proposed by Honius.

In the first place, for instance, he proceeds to say, some have held that there is simply bread and wine in the sacrament—that the bread only *signifies* the body of Christ, and, likewise, the wine His blood. Against this, he first of all presents the warning to which he throughout the entire controversy concerning the Lord's Supper constantly returns, namely, that we should let reason go, which cannot, indeed, comprehend the presence of the flesh and blood. Instead of reason, we must abide in simplicity by the words of Christ, who will not deceive us. It is a sacrilege to give to a divine word, without a *reason from Scripture or a clearly expressed declaration of Scripture*, any other than the natural (proper) signification. If we allow this sacrilege at one place, we cannot prevent it at other places. The passages, 1 Cor. x. 4 and Matt. xvi. 18 (quoted by Honius), prove nothing against this principle. Paul does not there say that the natural rock which Moses struck is Christ; but he speaks of a real spiritual rock, from which faith is nourished, and this does not merely signify Christ, but is Christ; in like manner, reference is made in Matt. xvi. only to this spiritual rock. *Faith* compels us not to take the rock here in a natural sense, but to understand it of a spiritual rock; since faith will not endure the thought that Christendom should build upon a material rock (Matt. xvi.), or that Christ should be a natural stone (1 Cor. x.). But that the bread is the body of Christ is a statement which faith endures, and opposes

[1] Erl. Ed., xxviii, 388 sqq. Cf. Lasicius, Lib. IV., Sect. 21. I do not know upon what grounds Gindely affirms that this writing of Luther had already been in the hands of the Brethren and translated by them in 1522.

in no single passage, just as we find even in nature, *e. g.*, two natures in the glowing iron, and say, "the iron is fire," and as we say also of Christ, "the man is God." If there be now nothing to compel faith to do otherwise, we must, as has been said, let every word stand in its natural significance. In all these discussions we have already propositions around which was waged the succeeding controversy between Luther, on the one hand, and Zwingli and Oecolampadius upon the other. Luther himself afterwards, in the midst of that controversy, referred to these earlier utterances, asserting that he had, in his letter to the Waldenses, already refuted the "Significationists" before anybody had ever thought that they were coming.[1]

As a further error, Luther instances the opinion that, according to 1 Cor. x. 16, 17 (cf. the propositions of the Brethren), the essence of the sacrament consists merely in the incorporation (*Einverleibung*) into the *spiritual* body of Christ, and that bread and wine were appointed merely as a certain sign for (to indicate) this incorporation and for the exercise of the spiritual body. According to this view, the individual believer, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, enjoys and participates with the other members of Christ's body in everything which His body does and suffers, although the latter, meanwhile, is not itself present in the sacrament, and although the participation in question is effected, not by virtue of the bread or the eating, but by virtue of the divine promise. And the very congregation itself, whose head is Christ, is supposed to typify His spiritual body. These propositions cannot fail to remind us most forcibly of Luther's own utterances in his *Sermon vom hochwürdigen Sacrament*, of the year 1519. His fundamental idea in the conception of the sacrament was there this very incorporation into Christ, and into the communion of saints, which typifies His spiritual body. Whereas he had there, however, regarded as a sure sign of such incorporation not simple bread, but rather the bread transformed into the body of Christ, and thus the truly present body of Christ,—he now, on the other hand, in opposition to this new doctrine, preserves a perfectly clear line of distinction between the spiritual (*geistig*) body of Christ, which we as believers constitute, and the natural body, which is given and distributed for

[1] Briefe, iii, 202.

us, and thus for the spiritual body. Referring to the apostolic statement in 1 Cor. x. 16, he pronounces the conclusion drawn from it by the opposing party as at least without sufficient support, inasmuch as it might be said, in refutation of it, that Paul is not in this passage attempting to express what the bread is in itself by virtue of the consecration, but that he, on the contrary, presumes that the Corinthians already know this, and speaks only of the use and benefit of the sacrament, just as he also, in verse 17, tells not what the bread is, but what it gives. Even if Paul should by the communion of the body of Christ mean that we are to enjoy all the blessings which Christ has secured by (the giving of) His body, yet this idea, in which there is, indeed, much truth, would still furnish no evidence for the assertion that the body of Christ is not also really present in the sacrament. Such a presence would not be excluded by the interpretation in question. If we now recur to the above-mentioned *Sermon*, we will find that Luther had there actually adopted such an interpretation of the immediately succeeding words of Paul, without at all inferring from it that the natural body was not present in the bread. He now, however, carries out still further the exegesis of the words themselves. While, as above, even upon the supposition that the sense of the words was such as was claimed, rejecting the conclusion drawn, he now, on the other hand, maintains the proper and certain sense of the words to be: "When we eat such bread, we all together, each as much as the other, receive and enjoy not simply bread, but the body of Christ." In the "communion of the body of Christ," which Paul declares the bread broken by us to be, he sees a common enjoyment of the real, natural body of Christ by all who break the bread, *i. e.*, who participate in the celebration of the sacrament. He depends, in support of his interpretation, mainly upon the apostle's declaration concerning the "breaking." This, says he, without doubt means the handling of the sacrament in giving and taking. Hence, the apostle is speaking of that communion which the "breakers of the sacrament" (each one as much as any other) enjoy. He cannot, moreover, have in view that *spiritual* communion in the body of Christ to which the words were applied by the exegesis above referred to, since that spiritual communion is not enjoyed by all who break the bread, although they all have (part in) the sacramental communion. Thus Luther not only finds in 1 Cor. x. a

testimony to the real presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament; but the passage further conveys for him especially the idea, that there is a reception of this body upon the part of such also as are not spiritually united to Christ, *i. e.*, upon the part of every one who, with other participants, receives the bread. The doctrine, that unworthy guests at the communion also receive the body of the Lord, is thus here already plainly enough expressed. In Luther's own mind it had doubtless before this time been held in connection with his unwavering faith in the presence of the body, even though he had not hitherto been led to speak of it specifically. Our rather extended examination of this section of the letter to the Bohemian Brethren finds its justification in the facts, that the position of Luther in this passage is pre-eminently characteristic, as indicating the historical development of his theory; that great stress is laid upon this passage also in the succeeding conflicts; and, still further, that Luther ever after clung tenaciously to the interpretation here given.

Luther then himself proceeds, after having shown the proper sense of the passage, to an acknowledgment of the fact that Christians are, indeed, the spiritual body of Christ, and that they all together constitute *one* bread, *one* drink, *one* spirit—that we become such a *one body* by a common participation in the One body of Christ, one bread and drink by the reception of the One bread and drink—and that this is, moreover, indicated by the natural bread formed from many grains and the natural wine made from many separate grapes (cf. *supra*, Vol. I., p. 339).

Speratus had also, in his correspondence with Luther, inquired *whence* the words of consecration, by whose use the presence of Christ's body was secured, have such power. The latter replies, as hitherto: It comes from the divine promise. And although this power (as he held in accord with the Roman Catholic Church) is not forfeited by the lack of faith in the consecrating priest, he yet now intones with special emphasis the statement, that it is yet *faith alone* which, by virtue of these words, consecrates. Even the unbelieving priest yet consecrates in the faith of the Church, since he performs the act upon the command and authority of the Church.[1]

[1] Briefe, ii, 211. In support of the view that through the words of consecration the body becomes present, compare Luther's declaration, Erl. Ed., xxviii, 295 (in the tract, *Von beider Gestalt*, etc., 1522: "for even the sac-

In regard to the association (*Zusammensein*) of the bread and the body in the sacrament, we have already been referred to the comparisons with glowing iron and with the unity of the divine and the human in Christ. The present document affords us, as compared with the treatise upon the *Babylonian Captivity*, no new statements upon this point.

But Luther now further applies the principle, that we should abide in simplicity by the words of Christ, with special reference to the question whether, with the presence of Christ's body in the sacrament, we are to hold also an immediate presence of the entire Christ and the entire Deity. The discussion as to the adoration of the sacrament also led to the consideration of this point, since all there depended upon whether He, to whom alone adoration belongs, is really present in the sacrament. This is the question as to the "Concomitance," discussed in Luther's letter of June 13, 1522,[1] and in the tract, *Vom Anbeten des Sacraments*.

Upon the part of the Brethren, as we see at once from the above letter, an explanation was desired as to "how the Deity is there concomitantly comprehended." Many, says the tract, *Vom Anbeten*, etc., have greatly concerned themselves to know how the soul and the spirit of Christ, and, accordingly, the Deity, the Father and the Holy Ghost, is in the sacrament. All such questions Luther casts aside as an unnecessary and destructive prying into hidden mysteries. He fears that they will only sow broadcast the seed for a crop of new scruples, and that men will, while remanding faith to the background, be led to take up again with the whole mass of senseless trash which the natural reason and philosophy in former days hatched out concerning infinity, vacuity, quantity, substance, etc. "Let the very smart and unbelieving sophists," says he in the tract, "worry themselves about such unfathomable things, and conjure the Deity into the sacrament: the body which thou takest—the Word which thou hearest, is that *of Him who grasps the whole world in His hand and who is in all the ends of the earth;* be thou content, then, with this." Similarly, he writes in the letter, that faith has enough in

rament itself is made and blessed by the Word of God;" further, also, touching the original institution of the Supper, Erl. Ed., xxviii, 67 (*Vom Missbrach der Messe*): "Christ takes bread and wine, and by the Word which He speaks makes of them His body and blood."

[1] Briefe, ii, 209 sq.

the knowledge that "under the bread is the body of *Christ the living* and *reigning*." He is not willing to understand by "concomitance" anything more than this.

In accordance with this, his doctrine of the presence of the body and blood, he then decides also the question as to the *adoration*. He will hear nothing of the propositions advanced in support of the "concomitance." He is fully satisfied with that which he has himself in his letter described as concomitance, *i. e.*, the presence of the body and blood *of the Christ to whom adoration belongs*. Faith, says he in the letter, adores only in the sense that it holds before the mind only the One whose body and blood are for it beyond doubt present in the sacrament. The Brethren had claimed that the presence of Christ is not always the same; that He is present in different ways in the sacrament and in heaven; and that He is present also in His saints, or Christian believers. In response to this, Luther acknowledges (cf. the above tract and letter) that Christ has, indeed, ascended to heaven in order that men might be bound and compelled to adore Him, and to confess that He is Lord over all; and that He is, on the other hand, present in the sacrament and in the hearts of believers, not for the particular purpose of receiving adoration, but in order therein to deal with us and help us. He, however, observes that Christ was once on earth, not in order that He might be adored, but in order to minister to us, and that He nevertheless accepted adoration from many persons. He even recognizes a certain adoration of Christ in the persons of His saints. Although His presence in man is for the most part not so certain as His presence in the sacrament, we yet read in 1 Cor. xiv. 25 of the unbelieving man who will worship God in His saints when he hears them prophesy. And when we greet one another with mutual respect, what is it but an honoring and worshiping God in one another? But Luther will not allow such adoration to be thought of as in any sense commanded; but, on the contrary, it is to be left as a matter of free choice to every one, since Christ Himself has given us no commandment to adore Him in the sacrament or in believing hearts.

Thus does Luther hold strenuously to the presence of the body and blood of the exalted, adorable Christ in the sacrament.

Nevertheless, with all his insistence upon this, he has yet, as before (cf. the introduction to his letter, as above), sought to lay

the chief emphasis again upon the *words* of the institution. Let us observe more particularly how he has here expressed himself upon this point. He has now, we are told, already frequently said that in the sacrament the most prominent thing and the principal part (*des Vornehmst und Hauptstück*) is the Word of Christ: "Take and eat, this is my body, which is given for you," etc. Everything depends altogether and entirely upon these words. They are words of life and of salvation, so that whoever believes them has, through such faith, the forgiveness of all his sins, and is a child of life. These words are unutterably great—the summary of the entire Gospel. Such importance is constantly attached by Luther to these words because, as we have seen, in them *is* promised and imparted to faith the forgiveness of sins based upon the sacrifice of Christ and the salvation thus secured. That presence of the body of Christ which is effected under the bread and wine, by the power of these very same words, appears, therefore, even now only as a peculiarly exalted sign and pledge, which is appended to the promise, the promise itself being the real redemptive blessing (*Heilsgut*) of the sacrament.

Luther proceeds to say, that very much more importance attaches to these words (*an diesen Worten weit mehr gelegen*) than to the sacrament itself, and that a Christian should accustom himself to pay much more regard to them than to the latter. He warns against a glorifying and worshiping of the sacrament, in which the attention is not, first of all, believingly directed upon the words. Then only does the treatise advance to a discussion of the presence of the body and blood, and, still further, of the reason and method of the proper adoration.

We must yet, in conclusion, add to the utterances of Luther touching the adoration of the sacrament the emphatic declaration with which he here again returns to the statements concerning the *Word* with which he opened the discussion. After having justified the adoration, but yet left the practice to the free choice of the communicant, he again points us to the words of institution. They, says he, teach us to consider why Christ is here. And whoever thus apprehends the sacrament in the Word will, in the presence of the sacrament, entirely forget his own adoration of it and his own deeds, just as the apostles did at their evening meal, and as reverent hearers of the Gospel, to whom, nevertheless, belongs the *very greatest* honor ("since God is more intimately

present in them than Christ in the bread and wine"), yet only sit still and listen, without thinking of the reverence which they are manifesting for the Word. Yea, they are the most secure and best (communicants) who "are altogether engaged with *the words* of the sacrament, in order that they may feed their *faith* and receive bread and wine with Christ's body and blood as a *sure sign of this same Word and faith*." Seldom, perhaps, do they fall so low as to concern themselves about the rendering of adoration and reverence. Let one but exercise faith aright in the first part of the sacrament, *i. e.*, the words, and the adoration will afterwards come in very suitably of itself; and even if it should not follow, no sin would be committed by its neglect. Where, on the other hand, faith is not right, or is not exercised in the Word, there no one can teach a proper adoration.

bb. Defence of the Bodily Presence against Carlstadt.

CARLSTADT'S "REMEMBRANCE" IS SELF-RIGHTOUSNESS — "τουτο" REFERS TO BREAD; "GIVEN" TO DISTRIBUTION—THE WORD VS. REASON—FORGIVENESS OF SINS BESTOWED—BODILY PRESENCE IN SACRAMENT AND IN HEAVEN—SYNECDOCHE—SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD—RELATION OF TWO NATURES IN CHRIST.

After the decisive way in which Luther had expressed himself against the Bohemian Brethren, and particularly after the condemnation which he had, from the very beginning, visited upon the entire tendency represented by the New Prophets, it was not to be expected that Carlstadt's theory of the Lord's Supper would in any degree unsettle his own convictions.

He was very soon compelled to note the rapid spread of this doctrine, according to which not only were the bread and wine now reduced to a bare sign, but the essence of the Lord's Supper in itself was located, not in the divine gift, but rather in the human act, the exaltation of man by his own energy to God. Already he designates Zwingli and Leo Judae as adherents of the view introduced by Carlstadt.[1] But only the more energetically does he on that account himself contend against them.

But how deeply Luther, in his publication, *Wider die himm-*

[1] Briefe, ii, 557, 571.

lischen Propheten, uncovered the contradiction which this theory involved in the whole conception of the plan of salvation, and especially in the view held touching the Lord's Supper, we have already observed. In the "remembrance of Christ," in which the essence of the celebration was upon Carlstadt's theory supposed to consist, he recognized again a new form of legality, a new work-righteousness. By his descanting upon the remembrance and the apprehension of Christ, upon fervent heat and self-mortification, Carlstadt was but raising mists and clouds about the clear words of Christ: "My blood is shed for you for the remission of sins"—which words are comprehended, secured and retained by faith alone, and by no work. Even though such remembrance were pure ardor, heart-heat and fire, he can see nothing to come of it but fresh hypocrisy, and fresh anxiety and distress for timid consciences, just as such were accustomed to torture themselves under the Papacy about a worthy receiving of the body of Christ. He declares, on the other hand: "*This* apprehension helps, if I with true faith firmly hold that Christ's body and blood are given for me, for me, for me—to atone for my sins—as the words in the sacrament declare."

As to the pledge of the presence of the body and blood in the sacrament involved in the words of institution, it can have occasioned Luther but small effort to refute Carlstadt's strange exegesis of the language employed. In the sentence, "Take, eat, this is my body," etc., a new thought is introduced, according to Carlstadt, with the word "this." Christ, he taught, with the word "this" (τοῦτο) pointed to His body, in which He was then sitting at the table, and said of *it*, that it would now be given over to suffering and death. The taking and eating, he claimed, relate to the bare bread,—and to this eating of the bread, then, the words of the Lord which follow, "Do this in remembrance of me," are supposed to refer. According to a later remark of Luther,[1] Carlstadt had drawn his first ideas concerning the τοῦτο from the text, Mk. xiv. 23, 24. Since it appears, from the account there given, that the disciples had already all drunken from the cup before Christ said: "This is my blood," Carlstadt, therefore, concluded that Christ in that declaration, made immediately afterward, pointed to the blood *in His body sitting there* (not to any blood

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 308.

offered to them in the cup), since the cup had now certainly been already drained. Luther disposes with ridicule of the argument that τοῦτο has a capital initial letter; and likewise of the assertion that τοῦτο, being neuter, cannot refer to ἄρτος. Here, says he, a man who has scarcely seen the A B C of the Greek language professes to understand Greek better than a born Grecian. Luther had heard orally presented the further argument, that Christ had also in Matt. xvi. 18 ("Thou art Peter, and upon this rock," etc.") first spoken of Peter (whose name signifies "rock"), and then immediately diverted the thought to that other Rock upon which the Church was to be founded.[1] To this he replies, that it must, first of all, be proved by clear text of Scripture that this is also, and must be, the case with the words employed in the Lord's Supper. This has been only asserted, not proved. Faith desires, as he has often before affirmed, to have the Word of God which shall bluntly assert that it is thus, and not otherwise.

Carlstadt's explanation did not lead to any controversy upon the meaning of the "is," as it also accepted this word in its proper signification. The ground of the discussion lay in different conceptions of the subject of which the "is," etc., is predicated.

If we now proceed to examine Luther's own exegesis of the words of institution, we find that he not only understands the τοῦτο as meaning the bread, but that he also refers the words "given for you" to the bestowal in the sacrament, and not to Christ's giving up of Himself to death.[2] In support of this position he appeals to the fact that the prophets never speak of a body and blood which is to be given for sin, but only of the suffering of the whole person—and, further, that a separation of the body and blood in the suffering would not have been necessary and could not have been made. The whole Christ was called upon to suffer, but at the table He divides in such a way as to give the body to eat, and the blood to drink. No less positively does Luther maintain in explanation of the "broken" body, 1 Cor. xi. 24, that, inasmuch as the τοῦτο in Paul also refers to the bread, the bread itself is the broken body, and hence

[1] Cf., in connection with this interpretation, Vol. I., p. 295.

[2] Yet in the tract, *Vom Misbrauch der Messe*, Erl. Ed., xxviii, 80 sq., Luther himself had referred these words to the atoning death of Christ.

necessarily " this breaking must be continued in the Supper and in the eating at the table." Thus, it is nothing else than the distribution of the body to the congregation. Moreover, the body is distributed whole and perfect in all the pieces of the bread. It was objected, that it should then be said " broken among us," rather than " for us." The latter expression is used, according to Luther, because this breaking of the bread and of the body occur for our benefit, in order to deliver us from sin; for Christ has deposited the energy and power of His suffering in the sacrament, so that we might there seek and find it, according to the significance of the words: " This is my body, which is given for you for the remission of sins."

Luther also again cites against Carlstadt the exegesis of 1 Cor. x. 16 which we have already found in his earlier writings, designating this passage a " thunderbolt upon the head of Carlstadt and all that crowd". It is in vain, says he, that Carlstadt tries to turn the edge of the weapon by representing the communion as a spiritual one, *i. e.*, that they only are to have such communion of the body of Christ who " with lolling desire meditate upon the sufferings of Christ and suffer with Him," etc. Against this idea, as against the interpretations above cited, he asserts that the communion of the body consists in this, that those who receive the broken bread, each one his own morsel, receive therein the body of Christ—that each one receives with the others the common body of Christ. As this already involves a participation in the body of Christ upon the part of all who participate in the breaking of the bread, and as he here again emphatically maintains this in opposition to the supposed " spiritual communion," he now still further supports the view of a *participation by the unworthy* by a special appeal to 1 Cor. xi. 29 and 27. The passage in 1 Cor. x. must also, he claims, be understood of a bodily communion shared by both the holy and the unholy.

Thus, then, does Luther, in opposing Carlstadt, as elsewhere, build entirely upon the actual words of Scripture. " I see here," says he, " bare, clear, powerful words which compel me, etc.; * * * how Christ is brought into the sacrament I do not know; but this I well know, that the Word of God cannot lie, and this Word declares that the body and blood of Christ are in the sacrament." He repeats, that we dare not depart from the

plainest natural sense of the words unless compelled by a perfectly clear article of faith. "The natural language is the Empress, and takes precedence of all subtle, acute and sophistical interpretations." He places the new and self-conceited spiritual exegesis in the same category as the ancient allegorizing, which we have long since found him denouncing as he proclaimed his fundamental principle of scriptural interpretation.[1] In this way also, says he, the great teacher, Origen, played the fool and misled many. There would thus remain not a single letter of the Scriptures secure against assaults of the spiritual jugglers. With the greatest energy does Luther, now and in the entire succeeding sacramental controversy, endeavor to ward off objections raised by reason against the divine Word, and especially against religious truth. In a special section of the publication now before us, he has undertaken to treat "of Madam Hulda, the shrewd Reason"—of the conclusions by which she seeks, in pure wantonness, to set aside the foundation of correct doctrine derived from the Word of God.

Luther could regard it as nothing less than a bold and frivolous assumption of reason, when Carlstadt scornfully inquired, whether the bread was to be made any better by the breathing and hissing out of the words of consecration. The divine Word, upon whose testimony he relies, is for him sufficient to produce also by its own power the presence of the body.[2] "We do not," says he, "blow nor hiss above the bread and wine; but we speak the divine, *almighty*, heavenly words which Christ Himself spake at the Supper with His holy mouth."

He charges, further, upon Carlstadt a plain perversion of the doctrine which he had in his previous writings already clearly enough presented, when the latter offers the objection, that the forgiveness of sins had been already purchased by Christ on the cross, and dare not, therefore, now be sought in the Lord's Supper. He now proposes, therefore, to express himself once more upon this point right "plainly and bluntly." It is true, that Christ *purchased* the forgiveness of sins on the cross, and not in the Lord's Supper, and that the purchase was there made once (once for all). But Christ did not *dispense* (*austheilen*) forgive-

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 434.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 67.

[2] In illustration of Luther's doctrine of the forgiveness of sins as the spirit-

ness on the cross, but in the Gospel and sacrament. It is here that we find the *Word*, which dispenses, bestows and presents to us the forgiveness purchased on the cross. And it is to be observed that Luther here insists especially upon that particular Word which offers us in the sacrament itself the body and blood of Christ as given *for us*. At the same time, however, he locates this dispensing also in the Gospel in general, wherever it is preached. It has taken place even from the foundation of the world, in the Word of salvation, which was announced to the race already before the death of Christ. For, since Christ (as already pre-existing) had decided to purchase forgiveness for men, He could dispense it just as well before as afterward through His Word. In this sense, also, the Lamb of God was, according to Rev. xiii. 8, slain from the foundation of the world. Thus Luther not only seeks to maintain for the Word and sacrament in general a significance in addition to that of the sacrificial death of Christ, but he now also positively demands that, in order to enjoy the fruits of the latter, believers must hold fast to these means of grace and appropriate what they offer—and he maintains this in opposition to the idea, that we, by an impulse from within, and by worship and spiritual exercise of our own, can and must lift ourselves up to (a reception of) the salvation purchased by Christ. I must not flee to the cross, nor, with Carlstadt, to the memory and apprehension of the sufferings of Christ, for there I can still not find forgiveness. I must cling to the sacrament, or Gospel. Carlstadt, says Luther, shows us the sacred mystery (*Heiligthum*) only as through a glass, or in a vessel, so that we may see and smell until we are satisfied—or, rather, only as in a dream. He does not give it to us, does not open it up to us, but, on the contrary, beclouds the Word which gives us the treasure.

Meanwhile, Carlstadt advanced also against the doctrine of the presence of the body and blood, which he had *interpreted out* of the formula of institution, arguments drawn from other passages

ual blessing offered in the supper, cf. Vol. I., p. 347; also, the "sermon" of Maunday Thursday, 1521, Erl. Ed., xvii, 68 sqq.; further, the "Hauptstück des ewigen und neuen Testaments," etc., 1522. Erl. Ed., xxii, 29 sqq. (the last-named containing inferences from the words of institution and a conception of the sacrament as a seal entirely in the spirit of the passages cited above. Vol. I., p. 347).

of Scripture and from the harmony of the faith—arguments in which the later opponents of Luther who rejected his exegesis upon this subject afterward found support, but which he now endeavored to refute in essentially the same way as that which he afterwards pursued.

Carlstadt followed Honius in quoting the declaration in Matt. xxiv. 23. To this Luther replied, that the words: "Here or there is Christ" refer not to Christ's body and blood, but to the entire Christ, that is, to His Kingdom, which, according to Lk. xvii. 20, does not come with outward demonstrations, and does not consist of outward things, places or times, but is within us. From this it is not to be inferred that Christ is nowhere, but rather that He is everywhere and fills all things (Eph. i. 23). And in this, His presence, He is bound to no single place, no single person. This, then, is the meaning of the passage in question, *i. e.*, that outward, bodily places and things dare not (as is done under the Papacy) be specially exalted above others and made necessary to salvation. With this principle, however, the presence of the body and blood of Christ does not, he claims, conflict; since it is not a visible presence in external places, but a hidden presence in the sacrament, that is taught. Nor is it held that the body must be at particular places; but, on the contrary, it is to be with the bread and wine, free at all places and for all times and persons, just like baptism and the preaching of the Gospel.

Luther had already also to deal particularly with the two arguments which claimed his attention afterwards in his principal treatise against Zwingli, in the year 1527.

Thus, Carlstadt already argued that Jesus Himself declares, in John vi. 63, that *His flesh profiteth nothing*. Luther inquires of what profit then, according to this argument, that flesh of Christ could have been, to which the Lord is said to have pointed when he said "τοῦτο." He demands, too, that a discrimination be made between *flesh* and *Christ's flesh*. The saying in John vi. 63 is not to be referred to the flesh of Christ at all, but is to be interpreted in connection with the following declaration, *i. e.*, that the words of Christ are spirit and life. By the flesh, which profiteth nothing, Christ accordingly means a carnal understanding of these, His divine words. "Flesh" here, as elsewhere in Scripture, denotes the carnal disposition, will, understanding and

fancy.[1] Luther then insists that a proper discrimination be made between the benefit (*Nützesein*) of the flesh of Christ in itself and its benefit to us. He never said, he asserts, that it is of benefit to any one who does not receive it in faith through the words of God which it contains. In itself, however, the body of Christ is always beneficial and profitable, just as God's Word is always profitable, although it is to the wicked a savor of death unto death, and as the sun is always shining, although it cannot be seen by the blind.

A further argument (the second above referred to) of the "Madam Hulda" was, that Christ would have to *leave His place in heaven* in order to enter into the bread, or, as Luther found the objection expressed in a tone of rude mockery by Carlstadt: Christ would have to spring up at once (*aufspringen*) whenever summoned by the putrid breath of a drunken priest — would have to allow Himself to be torn away and banished from heaven. In response, Luther refuses to hear anything of an interpretation of Christian belief according to which Christ "ascends and descends." He cites again the passage previously quoted, Eph. i. 23, declaring that Carlstadt does not understand the kingdom of Christ, how Christ is in all places and, according to this text, fills all things. He pressed the case still farther, declaring that this same spirit would then also have to contend that the Son of God, when He was in his mother's womb, had been compelled to forsake heaven—just as it would certainly, in course of time, begin to make sport of the divinity of Christ. He thus places side by side the omnipresence of the exalted Christ (Eph. i. 23), which was held to involve the possibility of His presence also in the Lord's Supper, and an existence in heaven, which must be attributed to the God-man as continuing without interruption even during the incidents attending the beginning of His incarnation. Earlier writings of Luther afford us no more definite view of the doctrine of Christ which lies at the basis of this

[1] In the sermon of the Church Postils, Erl. Ed., viii, 94, Luther applied the saying of Jesus, not to the carnal nature of the disciples, but to the flesh itself in distinction from a flesh with which the divine Word stands connected. Although the disciples did not pay due regard to the words of Christ (looking only upon His flesh as such), He has, by the words spoken in regard to His flesh, made this a real food. The theory of the sacrament, Word and sign, is precisely the same also in this sermon as in the outline just given above.

present discussion, nor of the relation of the divine to the human in His person.[1] We shall presently find this doctrine keenly developed in its relation to the theory of the Lord's Supper. In the treatise against the Heavenly Prophets, no further attention is paid to it. Luther does not hesitate to appeal, in support of the real presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament, not only to His incarnation, but also to the experiences of Stephen (Acts vii. 56) and Paul (Acts ix. 4), although there is in the former cases only a seeing (*Gesehenwerden*), and in the latter case, only a hearing (*Gehörtwerden*), of Him who dwells in heaven.

That which we have thus far presented from the tract against the Heavenly Prophets was designed by its author not so much to bring into full view his own apprehension of the way in which the body and blood are present, as to refute the arguments advanced against the real presence. This was, in the main, the immediate purpose of the publication in question. Nevertheless, the point last mentioned, *i. e.*, the question as to the relation of this presence to the existence of Christ in heaven, has brought to our attention for the first time a *very important positive item* in the doctrine of Luther. And a new tendency now becomes manifest in the development of Luther's conception of the subject, especially in connection with the very important question as to the *relation of the body and blood to the visible elements* which is implied in the words of institution.

The "sophistry and keen wit of Carlstadt and his horde" demanded to know how Christ could say of the *bread*, "This is my body." Luther had been accustomed to illustrate here by the glowing iron and the coincidence of the two natures in Christ. He now replies to these objectors, that they should either give God the glory, and be content simply to receive His Word; or, if they wanted to be so very wise, they should at least frame their arguments in accordance with the laws of composition and the natural modes of speech. He then immediately presents to them again the two illustrations above cited. According to the natural mode of speech, we say of a piece of glowing iron: This is fire. Similarly, we say of the man, Christ: This (man) is God; and again: God is man. He then proceeds to say that, if this mode of speech does not please them, they might then avail themselves

[1] Cf. Bk. IV.

of the fact that the Scriptures make frequent use of the figure known as *Synecdoche*, mentioning the whole of an object when they mean to designate only a part. Thus, for example, Moses calls the children of Israel God's peculiar people, and Paul calls the Galatians and Corinthians the congregation of God, although, in either case, but the minority really belonged to God, or were His true children.[1] Thus, also, these very wise people might have interpreted the whole object of which Christ speaks, *i. e.*, the bread and the body, as indicating the body alone; understanding Him as saying, "This is my body," without making any mention of the bread. The bread is, indeed, also present, but, inasmuch as everything depends upon the body, He speaks as though there were nothing there but the body. In a similar way, a mother might point to the cradle in which her child is lying, and say: This is my child.

This explanation, based upon a supposed synecdoche, Luther employs also in his discussions with Zwingli and Oecolampadius, in order to justify the relation between the subject and the predicate in the words of institution. The subject expressed in τοῦτο is, according to this view, the bread and the body together, regarded as one whole: but when Christ in the τοῦτο referred to this whole, he yet actually meant only the one invisible part of the whole. This mode of explanation marks, beyond question, an advance in the method by which Luther sought to make the meaning of these words clear to himself and others. The argument touches also the essential features of the question at large, inasmuch as, under this conception of the thought embodied, the bread and the body, whilst associated, are yet at the same time kept more distinctly apart than was the case in the figure of the glowing iron. Yet we must bear in mind, also, that Luther, even when employing the latter figure, yet never thought of it in such a way as to involve the idea, that the iron in becoming glowing changed its own properties or had experienced any transformation. He, on the contrary, conceives of the fire as a separate substance, which is present together with the substance of the iron. Each of these substances retains also, as he says, "its nature for itself," although they "are in one another and like one

[1] As to the use which the Scriptures make of Synecdoche, cf. also already Luther's Enarrat. in Epist. et Evang., Jena, ii, 342 sq. ("Synecdoche est, quando totum pro parte et e diverso accipitur"); also Jena, ii, 409 b, sqq.

thing." Nor does he, when illustrating the association (*Zusammensein*) of the bread and the body by the fact that the iron and fire, or the divine and human natures of Christ, are "in one another as one thing," mean to say that the precise way and mode of becoming thus "one thing" is in all these instances the same. He does not, therefore, now wish to be understood as having in this comparison, nor in the suggestion of a synecdoche, set up any different conception of the actual relation between the bread and the body, but only a different mode of expressing that relation. In this spirit he presents them side by side to the consideration of his pretentious opponents. He afterwards plainly says, further, that the simile of the glowing iron itself may be regarded as a form of synecdoche.

But from the entire detailed discussion of the presence of the body and blood under the bread and wine which we thus find in the publication against the Heavenly Prophets we are now brought back, as in the deliverances of Luther against the Bohemian Brethren, to the significance which is claimed for the WORD itself in connection with the body present in the bread. Here also, we are unable now to discover any modification in the Reformer's conception of the subject.

We have observed how emphatically Luther has designated as divine and almighty the words which Christ commanded to be spoken at the celebration of the sacrament. By virtue of *these*, and not by virtue of any human "blowing and hissing," the body of Christ is present in the sacrament. Even before this time, Luther had not only said of these words, that we in (the exercise of) faith upon them receive *the forgiveness which is offered in them*, but he had never sought the grounds upon which the presence of the body was actually, according to the will of God, manifested anywhere but in the very words of the consecration, or institution, themselves.

Still further, we now find Luther yet maintaining also that by these very words, in so far as faith is awakened by them and clings to them, *the forgiveness of sins is itself imparted to us*. This is evident especially in the propositions upon the "dispensing" (*Austheilung*) of forgiveness, which immediately succeed the above utterance upon the omnipotence of the words, and which we have already cited in that connection. Thus he here—in precisely the same spirit as upon previous occasions—places the

words of the sacrament and the preaching of the Gospel in general together, as "the Word, which dispenses to me such forgiveness." He even, further, associates this New Testament Word with those divine words of grace through which, from the very foundation of the world, such dispensations of grace had been likewise mediated. He adds now the assertion that, if the body and the blood were not present in the Lord's Supper, yet the forgiveness of sins would be there by virtue of this same Word ("my body *given for you*").

But what especial blessing, promotive of their eternal happiness and their assurance of salvation, is, according to this, in addition to the Word in so far as the latter dispenses this forgiveness to faith, offered to believing participants through the body of Christ, which is present by virtue of the Word? Even the treatise against Carlstadt furnishes us no other answer than that it is an especially lofty pledge attached to the bare words, as special security for the bestowal of the forgiveness therein granted.[1]

Turning, finally, to the word "*remembrance*" (*Gedächtniss*), in which Carlstadt placed the essential feature of the Lord's Supper, we shall find that Luther also, while intoning above all else the divine gift in the sacrament, at the same time recognizes the act of remembrance, in accordance with the words of the Lord: "Do this in remembrance of me." In presenting, however, his own conception of the nature and place of this feature in the ordinance, he represents it as an "external remembrance," since in the very reception of the sacrament we proclaim Christ's death, confess him, and preach the Gospel. Nor is such a remembrance to be thought of as justifying, but those who desire thus to proclaim and preach must be (in faith and the Word) justified beforehand.

Such are, then, the doctrines touching the Lord's Supper with which Luther met Carlstadt and his associates in the pamphlet issued in the beginning of the year 1525. We have observed to what weighty utterances touching the *Person of Christ* he had then already been led by the course of the controversy. By Easter of the same year, we find him[2] also preaching against the Fanatics, expressly upon the *relation of the two natures in Christ.*

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 351; supra, p. 70.

[2] Erl. Ed., xix, 18 sqq.; xxv, 91 sqq. Cf. also Ibid., vii, 186, and further, under the Person of Christ, in Bk. IV.

The point of the discussion was for him here the work of salvation itself, and precisely how this work depended upon the unity of the two natures in the person of Christ, *i. e.*, the very point for which we shall afterwards find him contending, especially in his *Grosses Bekenntniss vom Abendmahl*, as against Zwingli and his *Allœosis*. He now already rejects the view of his antagonists as Nestorian. As he was then engaged in expounding the Book of Exodus from the pulpit, the narrative of the Burning Bush and the prophecy concerning the Seed of Abraham furnished him occasion to discuss the subject. In the speaking of God from the midst of the bush, he sees a picture of the divine nature of Christ as having entered into the human, which may be conceived as a frail green bush. Both natures, he says, must now remain together in one person, as in man body and soul are one person. But God became man in order to suffer and die, and this suffering is indicated by the burning of the bush. He is a spirit, and as such incapable of suffering; it was necessary therefore for Him to become man, in order to suffer. And God now suffers here in this person of Christ, and does not remain outside of it, as is taught by some fanatics, who hold that the humanity of Christ alone suffered and redeemed us. It is the entire Christ —the God who became man—who died and rose again,—not, it is true, according to His divinity, since the divine nature cannot suffer; but according to the humanity which He assumed. It would have been a poor redemption indeed, if only the man Christ had been crucified, and not at the same time God, or the Son of God, united in this one person. We, therefore, glorify and worship not only the bare humanity in Christ, but God and man at once, as the true Creator of the heavens and the earth, united in one person,—as is also confessed by the Council of Ephesus against Nestorius, and by John Damascenus. We speak of God the Incarnate, not in the abstract nor in the absolute, but in the concrete, declaring that Christ, the Son of God and of Mary, is the Creator, and has by His sufferings brought immortality to light, etc. Against this, the devil is now trying to introduce again the old Nestorian heresy. In these passages, Luther makes no application of his Christology to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

d. *Support of Ecclesiastical Order, especially of a Regular Call to the Ministry, against Carlstadt and Other Fanatics.*

UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD—ABUSE OF DOCTRINE BY ZWICKAU PROPHETS —CALL TO MINISTRY — LAY ACTIVITY — INTRUSIONS BY ANABAPTISTS—RESISTANCE OF LEGAL AUTHORITY.

With respect to the Lord's Supper, we shall have to follow the course of development in Luther's doctrine still further in a special section. Various points of this doctrine are first brought into prominence by him in his controversy with Zwingli and Oecolampadius, or, at least, then placed in a new light and presented in a fuller exposition.

We find, on the contrary, the principles of Luther upon *Ecclesiastical Order*, the call to the ministry, etc., as he publicly advocated them after his return from the Wartburg, already announced, in all their essential features, in his first controversial writings against the "Fanatical Spirits." Whatever later writings furnish upon these subjects may therefore be fittingly treated in the present section.

A violent revolution in the entire conception of ecclesiastical activities, ecclesiastical offices, and ecclesiasticism in general was effected by the reformatory idea of the *Universal Priesthood* in the minds of all who accepted that doctrine. Such not only felt their souls freed from the entire curse and yoke of human mediatorship, which had in the separate "spiritual order" intruded itself between them and their God and Saviour; they not only, in so far as they exercised real faith, knew themselves to be equally near to the great Head in heaven, and equally entitled to share the promise and the gift of the Holy Ghost: but they had all likewise received the lofty and holy authority to exercise priestly functions among their fellow-christians and fellow-men as members who, just because having equal share in the body and Head, ought to promote one another's mutual well-being, and to allow the vital energy pulsating within them to flow out upon one another. And with this consciousness of authority must have been awakened also, in vigorous and joyous energy, the consciousness and impulse of a common duty and a common Christian calling.

Side by side with this great exaltation of the individual believer, stood however, as we have seen, from the beginning, in the writings of Luther the caution, that the inference must not be drawn that, just because every one is equally consecrated to be a priest and bishop, every one may therefore presume to exercise that office in the congregation. Offices in the Church, he held, must be conferred by the fellowmembers, or the congregation. Room was, however, left here for many of the weightiest questions. In how far, in general, should the public priestly function exercised within the congregation, *i. e.*, that of teaching, be made fixedly and permanently the exclusive calling of a particular individual among so many? How should the election and commissioning by the congregation be conducted? What aggregation of believers should be acknowledged as properly the Church? How should the congregation, as such, be outwardly represented? Especially, what may and should be done, if an individual believer should be utterly unable to find any true evangelical congregation?

Before Luther had attempted to give a definite answer to these questions, doubtless before he had even formed clearly and sharply his own judgment in regard to all the points which might be raised, the so-called Prophets, who refused to hear anything at all of any such external call, had begun their operations in Wittenberg. With their assault upon the external ecclesiastical order he saw immediately connected in these Fanatics, and also in Carlstadt and the later Anabaptists, a spirit of contempt for the objective, divinely-appointed means of grace themselves. Under the stress of this entire and internally consistent movement, he now framed and completed his own doctrine upon the subject.

In encountering the Zwickau Prophets, he at once announced his general theory of the *Call to the Ministry*,[1] in entire harmony with his previous deliverances, as follows: Whoever desires to exercise the office of the public ministry must show that he has been sent by God; but God has never sent any one who had not been either called by men or approved of God Himself by miracles. In accordance with these principles, therefore, even the New Prophets must prove their calling.

Luther then, in a communication addressed in Latin to the "Council and People of Prague" in 1523,[2] presented a new

[1] Briefe, ii, 125.

[2] Jena, ii, 576 b sqq.

exposition of his principles touching the universal priesthood, especially the teaching authority which it involves, as also the competency of a congregation to establish such an office in its midst. In connection with this, we have also the German publication: "*That a Christian Assembly, or Congregation, has the Right and Authority to Judge all Doctrines, to Call Teachers,*" [1] etc.

The fundamental idea here is again that contained in the thesis: A priest is not the same as a presbyter or minister (*Sacerdotem non esse quod presbyterum vel ministrum*): the former is born, the latter made. The present document, therefore, at once lays down this principle, and then proceeds to present, in some respects more fully than any of the earlier writings of Luther, the functions of the born priesthood, embracing them under seven heads, as follows: 1. The proclamation of the Word. 2. Baptism, which even women are allowed to administer in cases of necessity. 3. The administration of the Lord's Supper. The command of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of me," is addressed to all. Moreover, the two offices first named are greater matters than the consecration of bread and wine, and the less will surely not be prohibited to him to whom the greater is committed. 4. The binding and loosing of sin, the authority for which is, according to Matt. xviii., committed to the entire congregation, and which is nothing more than the proclamation and application of the Gospel. 5. The rendering of sacrifice, according to Rom. xii. 1 and 1 Pet. ii. 5, *i. e.*, the crucifixion of one's own flesh and the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. 6. Priestly intercession for others before God in prayer. 7. Independent judgment of dogmas in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

In regard particularly to the ministry of the Word, or the preaching of the Gospel, especial attention should be given to the use made of the passage, 1 Cor. xiv. 26 sqq., in connection with which we refer back also to the tract, *Vom Missbrauch der Messe*. Luther had there declared that, although it is not allowable for many to preach at once simply because all have authority to preach, and although, according to 1 Cor. xiv. 40, all things must be done decently and in order, yet these restrictions do not annul the equal share of all in the office itself. He interpreted

[1] Erl. Ed., xxii, 140 sqq.

the counsel of the apostle, that two or three should speak with tongues and two or three arise to prophesy, as indicating that every one who has the special gift required should be allowed to speak before the congregation, and that whoever is "better fitted than others" (*vor Andern geschickt*) may undertake to do so. Women are prohibited by the apostle, simply because speaking belongs to, and much better becomes, a man, and he is better fitted for it.[1] In the same spirit he now, in his *Address to the Council and People of Prague*, quotes, in support of the universal authority for the proclamation of the Word, the statements of Paul in 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 31: "Every one of you hath a psalm," etc.; "Ye may all prophesy one by one," etc., and then asks: "Who is 'every one'? Who are 'all'? Does he by these universal terms mean only the shaved fellows?" Yet more distinctly he says, in the subsequent German document: "So then St. Paul here commands every one in the assembly of Christians to arise *when it is necessary*, even without being called upon, and by this divine word he calls him to the office, and commands the others to retire, and deposes them by the authority of these words," etc. "Christ gives authority to every Christian to teach among his fellow-christians *when it is necessary*," etc.[2]

Luther here endeavors also to base even the *authority of the congregation*, as such, to call its own ministers upon these principles touching the universal priesthood. If, says he, every believer has this authority, it certainly cannot be doubted that the congregation, having received the Gospel, may and ought to select from its number the one who shall teach the Word in its stead. And, he repeats, just because these things are all common to all believers, no one dare press forward in his own authority and violently appropriate to himself that which is the common property of all. "It is one thing to exercise (*exsequi*) this right habitually in public, and another thing to employ it in case of necessity. To exercise it habitually in public is not permitted except with the consent of the whole body, or the Church; in case of necessity, whoever wishes to do so may employ it." He, accordingly, advises the Bohemians to appoint their own ministers. These should be selected from the bosom of the congregation itself, com-

[1] Erl. Ed., xxviii, 47 sqq. Jena, ii, 470 b sqq.

[2] Jena, ii, 581 b. Erl. Ed., xxii, 148.

mended to the whole body (*universitati*), and confirmed in their office with prayer and the laying on of hands. Nor must we overlook the significant fact, that this communication of Luther is itself addressed primarily to the *Council* of Prague. Luther evidently recognizes in that body the proper representatives (*Haüpter*) of the congregation. No other meaning can be attached to the passages in which he discriminates the persons here directly addressed from the general body (*Gesammtheit*). He then continues, offering the still more definite counsel: After all whose hearts God has moved to become like-minded with yourselves have voluntarily assembled, proceed in God's name, and elect those whom you may desire and who appear fitted for the office: then, the hands of those *who have been most influential among you* being laid upon them, confirm them (in the office) and commend them to the people and to the congregation, or general body. In a case in which evangelical faith and goodwill might be presupposed upon the part of the secular officials, he advises the congregation to proceed in the same way.[1] The German document goes still further. Whilst there demanding that the bishops, even when faithful and evangelical, shall appoint no preachers "without the will, election and call of the congregation," he makes an exception for the case when necessity compels, in order that souls may not perish for want of the divine Word. In such a case, he declares, any one may secure a preacher, whether by pleading for one or through the power of the secular government; or ought himself, if he is able, to arise and teach, since necessity knows no law—just as it is the duty of every one to run to a conflagration in the town without waiting to be implored to come. Accordingly, also, where there is no preaching of the Word, and the bishops refuse to do their duty, a preacher may be appointed for the individuals who desire to hear the Word, either by the secular authorities or even "by pleading" (*i. e.*, doubtless, by imploring one to come to them. Cf. the use of the word in the last sentence). Moreover, the individual believer may himself assume the ministry of the Word in order to deliver others from distress.[2] Luther still further suggests also to the Bohemians that, after many cities shall have been supplied with bishops and preachers by the method pro-

[1] Jena, ii, 584–586.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxii, 149.

posed, the latter might then be permitted to elect visitors, or superintendents, from their own number, until Bohemia should again secure a regular and evangelical archiepiscopate.

But how can the application of the texts in 1. Cor. xiv. made in the passage above cited be reconciled with what is here said of the calling and legitimizing of individuals by the congregations? We find in Luther here no clear and distinct declaration as to how far it is actually allowable, in congregations already having an evangelical pastor or "bishop," for others, not formally inducted into office, to arise before the congregation with their "prophesying" (which Luther understands to mean simply the proclamation of the Word). According to the German document, it would rather appear that the individual believer should employ his authority and gifts only in the case of necessity, when he shall fail to find the truth of the Gospel upon the lips of the regularly-appointed minister. By the "retiring" of the latter, referred to in the passage quoted above, Luther understands therefore a deposition. But when such cases are actually presented—especially in places where the Papacy had entirely excluded the proclamation of evangelical truth—Luther insists most vigorously upon this right and duty of every individual believer, appealing to the example of Stephen (Acts vi.) and Philip (Acts viii.), who, ordained merely to the diaconate, yet preached the Gospel by virtue of the general right of all believers, without being called by any one, wherever they found a door open to them and the people, ignorant and without the Word, standing in need of their ministry. He points also epecially to Apollos (Acts xviii. 25 sq.), who taught at Ephesus without any call or ordination, alone upon the basis of the words spoken for all in 1 Cor. xiv. 31. and 1 Pet. ii. 9. When he, in this connection, speaks of "erring heathen and unchristians" (*Unchristen*) to whom we are thus under obligations to preach, he certainly means by the last, as the entire context proves, particularly those poor souls under the dominion of the Papacy who yet know really nothing of Christian salvation. Of such cases of necessity and distress, he says: "Thus (as Apollos) every Christian is bound to act, when he sees that there is need for the Word and is capable (of giving it), although the general body (*universitas*) do not call him"; and again: "A Christian, impelled by brotherly love, regards the distress of poor souls, and does not wait to see

whether instructions, or letters of authority, may be given to him by princes or bishops, since necessity breaks all laws. Love is in duty bound to help where there is no one else to do so.[1]

Such was the teaching of Luther in regard to the universal priesthood, while the latter doctrine was already being perverted by others to the grossest abuse. He was greatly concerned both to preserve to congregations, on the one hand, by means of this doctrine, the possiblility of securing evangelical preaching and pastors, and, on the other, to keep the territory already won for the Gospel free from the perversions referred to. His sincerity in maintaining the first position was manifest, for example, in the case of the Peasants, in whose behalf he asserted the principle, that believers who are hungering for the Word are authorized to appoint a preacher for themselves. They had, in their *Twelve Articles*, first of all demanded that an entire congregation should have the authority to elect or depose a pastor (A. D. 1525). Though most severely calling the insurgent peasants to order, he yet candidly says of this article, that it is right, if it be only carried out also in a Christian way. If the property of the parish has come from the secular authorities, the congregation cannot appropriate it for the use of the preacher whom they themselves have elected. They should, much rather, first appeal to the authorities to send them a pastor, and if their request be refused, then elect one for themselves, and support him also with their own means.[2]

[1] Jena, ii, 588 b sq. Erl. Ed., xxii, 146 sq. In the first part of the Church Postils, issued from the Wartburg (Erl. Ed., vii, 219 sq.), Luther had pressed the example of Stephen still further. He there says: "This man gives authority by his example to every one to preach wherever people will listen to him, whether in the house or upon the market-place * * * ready to be silent when the apostles themselves preach." In 1 Cor. xiv., he sees only a requirement of order, so that not all may be preaching at once, but one after the other, and then remarks: "A true sermon ought to come in like a speech at a collation when some subject is under discussion." In the *Weimar Sermons of 1522* (published by Höck), p. 91, Luther, after maintaining as before the universal priesthood and, upon the basis of this, the limitation of preaching to the separate individuals specifically entrusted with it, infers from 1 Cor. xiv. merely that, if I hear any one preaching wrongly, I ought to condemn his doctrine and bid him surrender his office (abtreten: step down). This he maintains against the Papists, who wanted to be judges of the Christian Church. We have here, therefore, the same conception of 1 Cor. xiv. as in the writings above cited.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxiv, 280.

Meanwhile, the revolutionary movements of the "fanatical spirits," who paid no regard whatever to human appointment or outward order, continued upon the territory of the Reformation.

We have already seen how Carlstadt justified his view, that any one should preach even without an external call. He did not, nevertheless, make unrestricted use of this authority in his own case. When, at the end of the year 1523, for example, he forced himself into the position of minister at Orlamund, which was already supplied with evangelical preaching, he found means to secure, at the same time, a call from the council and congregation of the city. Luther afterwards told the people of Orlamund that his own books must be false, if Carlstadt was not their pastor, since he had been elected by them. It would not be sufficient, therefore, as against him, to simply repeat the general requirement of a regular call to the ministry. Luther now demands of him, however, some evidence that he had been originally invited by the people of Orlamund, charging upon him that he had, in reality, gone thither without a call and had then himself persuaded and incited the people in his behalf. In addition to this, he charged him with having deserted his position at Wittenberg without the permission of his prince. Luther, therefore, still continued to insist that Carlstadt would have been compelled to prove his inner call by miraculous signs. God, he maintained, does not violate his old ordinances by the institution of new ones without at the same time performing great miracles. We dare not, therefore, believe any one who appeals to his spirit and inward feelings, and outwardly rages against the regular order of God. As to the right of the congregation in general to elect its own pastor, Luther here also, as shortly afterward in addressing the Peasants, expresses himself as follows: The people of Orlamund had no authority, under any circumstances, to elect a pastor upon the salary which belonged to another. They should have complained to the prince and the University, who had the bestowal of the pastorate in their power, and petitioned for a Christian pastor. If the prince had refused, they might then have considered what further course to pursue.[1]

The attempts of the Anabaptists to force their way into the congregations now called forth frequently from Luther new and

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiv, 391, 399 (Luther and Carlstadt at Jena, A. D. 1524); xxix, 172–176.

emphatic expositions of his doctrine upon the call to the ministry; as, for example, in the sermon of the Church Postils for the *Eighth Sunday after Trinity*, in the Sermon on *St. Andrew's Day* and those upon the *Book of Exodus*. While insisting upon a regular call (*Berufensein*) for every preacher, he designates two methods of calling, the *immediate* and the *mediate*, but traces even the latter back to God Himself. The former he will grant in no case unless attested by miracles, even though the preacher laying claim to it manifest otherwise the proper evangelical spirit. He regards the impression held by such a one as a temptation by which God is testing him, to see whether he will abide by the established order. By the mediate call, or the call from God through men, he means that in which the congregation, or the secular authorities in behalf of the congregation, petition (for a particular preacher).[1] He designates this "*a call of love*." In this case, that is to say, the commandment, "Love God, and your neighbor as yourself," is held before the minister so called by the people, and, impelled by God through the power of this commandment, he is authorized without any miracle to preach. Here again an exception is made by Luther, for the case in which one should come into a community of unchristian people, under which circumstances he would allow love to address itself, without any external call, to the ministry of the Word. We would there, says he, have authority to do as the apostles did. We find nothing here said, however, of an extension of this principle, so as to cover the territory within the bounds of Christendom which is still without the preaching of the Gospel. The illustration drawn from the course of the apostles applies rather to people not even formally Christian.[2]

Luther, incited by the stubbornness and the dangerous character of the intruders, went still further, at length, in his later writings; as, for example, in the *Exposition of Psalm lxxxii*, A. D. 1530, and in the pamphlet, *Von den Schleichern und Winkelpredigern*, A. D. 1532.[3] He condemns, first of all, their secret methods. The Holy Spirit, he says, does not sneak, but flies down openly from heaven. These men find their way stealthily

[1] The later editions of the Postils omit the words, "in behalf of the congregation:" Erl. Ed., xiii, 200.

[2] Erl. Ed., xiii, 198 sqq.; xv, 4 sqq.; xxxv, 37 sqq.

[3] Ibid., xxxix, 253 sqq.; xxxi, 213 sqq.

to the side of toilers in the harvest-field, lonely travelers in the woods, etc. If they were honorable men, they would first call upon the pastor, show him their call to the ministry, and ask him for permission to preach in public. This he does not mean, however, as an assurance that he would acknowledge their call even if they should thus openly present themselves, since he failed to recognize in them, not only the ordinary mediate call, but that inner call as well, which requires miraculous attestation. He warns against listening to these men, who "come of their own choice and piety," even though they profess to teach the pure Gospel—yea, even though they were angels and, all of them, Gabriels from heaven. Very emphatically does he now also insist upon the exclusive authority of every pastor in his own parish. To each one has been committed, according to 1 Pet. v. 3, his portion of the people as his "heritage" (κλῆρος). Here dare no other, without his knowledge and consent, undertake to instruct the parishioners either secretly or publicly. The case was different with the apostles; they had been instructed to preach *at all places*, and hence went even into the houses of strangers. Now, every pastor has his definite parish.[1]

Luther's conception of the expressions employed by the apostle in 1 Cor. xiv. had thus received a characteristic modification. The "Sneaks" had planted themselves upon that passage, because it appeared to give them authority to pass judgment upon the regular ministers of the churches and to claim an equal right to set up their own preaching against the latter. But Luther now, in opposing them, makes a sharp distinction between "the prophets, who are to teach, and the people (*der Poebel*), who are to listen." And he recognizes in the congregations no other "prophets" than the teachers to whom the ministry of the Word has been formally, permanently and exclusively committed. Even from these he demands the evidence that they have received such commission through a regular call from their fellowmen, unless they can perform miracles in attestation of their authority. Without such an office, sharply defined and conveyed through an external call, he grants to no Christian the authority to make any peculiar inner endowment which he may possess productive for the congregation by means of any public teaching whatsoever.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 214 sq.; xxxix, 254.

He sees in the disputed passage, therefore, instructions designed only for the regular preachers of the Word, and not for the activity of such members of the congregation at large as may have been divinely endowed with a peculiar gift for teaching. Whereas he had previously found the explanation of the prohibition of preaching by women in their lack of fitness, he now sees in it an evidence that Paul is there speaking only of regular ministers. If the apostle had there meant to command the congregation, and not only the preachers, to preach, he could not thus have forbidden the women, who are also a part of the congregation. He does not even think of the possibility that there may be yet an intermediate position,—between the limitation of preaching to the officials thus formally and permanently appointed and a preaching of the congregation at large.

His conception of the order of worship as represented in 1 Cor. xiv. is now as follows: The prophets "sat in the church among the people as the *regular pastors and preachers*," and one or two of them sang or read the text. One of them, whose turn (or duty) it was, spoke upon the text and expounded it. Then another of them might speak upon it, confirming what had been said, or explaining more fully. It was very much as in the assembly of a prince's council, or in the meeting of a burgomaster with his fellow-counselors, when one after another rises and they assist one another in their deliberations. Thus the prophets were the church-council, whose duty it was to teach the Scriptures and to govern and provide for the congregation. But no citizen dare force his way unbidden into the council, to overpower the burgomaster; much less may a sneaking stranger or a layman intrude upon the spiritual council. He understands, still more precisely, by those who "speak with tongues" the ministers who read or sing the text, and by the prophets, those who "expound the text." The "Ἰδιώτης" of 1 Cor. xiv. 16, is for him any member of the congregation, and is restricted to the hearing of the Word. He translates the word, "layman." He finds the "difference between the preacher and layman" here clearly expressed. Thus, while he steadfastly maintains the peculiar "spiritual" and the general "priestly" character of all believers, and, no less, demands a certain external exercise of the universal priesthood, attributing especially to every member of the congregation the duty of imparting proper instruction within the family

circle, yet, in so far as the exercise of the office of public instruction within the congregation is concerned, he adopted a very rigid conception of the limitations of the laity. He still finds a "little indication or trifling footprint" of the apostolic order, as traced above, in the cases where "one sings after another in the chancel, and one lesson is read after the other," etc., and, still further, where one preacher translates the lesson read by another. He fears, however, that if the old method were now revived, the people would prove too wild and forward. An evil spirit might find its way into the midst of the pastors, preachers and chaplains, so that they might fall to struggling among themselves for the ascendancy and to quarreling and biting one another in the presence of the people. Paul did not, moreover, wish to urge so strongly that the same method should always be observed, but only that all things be done in an orderly way, and he cited this method merely as an example. Here, again, we observe that Luther regards the prophets as represented by the "pastors, preachers and chaplains" of the modern Church, *i. e.*, the formally appointed ministers of the Word. The same interpretation underlies a publication of A. D. 1531, in which Luther says that where anything is revealed to another than the chief teacher, the latter should, according to 1 Cor. xiv. 30, keep silent and submit (*folgen*). The "chief teacher" is here the highest official among the regular teachers, corresponding to the burgomaster in the council of a city (Luther is in this passage speaking of the authority of his own public testimony as over against papal superiors in the Church).[1]

Luther now, at length, leaves no longer any room for the free exercise of public instruction upon the part of such individual Christians as know themselves to be in possession of the truth and as feel the impulse of the Spirit, even in localities in which the present incumbent of the ministerial office is actually open to the charge of failing to teach the truth. He urges, as we have seen, that the supposed teachers, instead of sneaking about, address themselves to the pastors of each locality. Should they here meet with a repulse, he then commands them to be satisfied with the attempt which they have made, without any regard to the question whether the congregations involved be not in

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi. 220–226; xxv. 87.

need of purer teaching: they are exonerated before God, and may shake off the dust from their feet. Even still more plainly, he declares that, if God does not awaken some whom He Himself attests by signs and deeds, outside of and above the established order, we are bound to observe such order, and leave the matter to the regularly appointed officials: "If they do not teach rightly, what have you to do with that? You certainly will not be called to account for it." He even applies this principle expressly to the preaching under the Papists. When he insists, in the above-mentioned passage in the *Exposition of Ps. lxxxii*, upon the exclusive authority of the pastor in every parish, he grants such authority to the popish parish-priests and other errorists, if they be but regularly-ordained pastors. He proceeds then to say: "We should, therefore, firmly maintain, that no preacher whatsoever, however pious or trustworthy, should presume to preach to, or secretly to teach, the parishioners of a popish or heretical pastor without the knowledge and consent of the pastor in question.[1]

But how then, may we ask, did Luther justify his own teaching upon so widely extended a field? Often and earnestly did he refer to the office of Doctor of the Holy Scriptures which had been regularly, and without any agency of his own, conferred upon him, and found in it encouragement, comfort and urgent obligation to put forth efforts for which he would have otherwise had neither courage and resolution, nor strength and blessing. He now, likewise, relies upon this as, though a preacher at Wittenberg only, he yet undertakes through his books to teach throughout the whole world. When he was compelled to become a doctor, he declares, he did not assume the office willingly, but was forced and driven into it. He there began, as a Doctor in a common, free University by papal and imperial decree, and, as he was bound by this, his sworn position, to do, to expound the Scriptures before the whole world and instruct all men; and, having once entered upon such work, he has been compelled to keep at it, and cannot even now withdraw with a good conscience. At the same time, Luther would reserve also to others than doctors the liberty of working in wider circles by means of books. Even in his office as a preacher, he adds, he had sought

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 215, 223; xxxix. 254. Comm. ad Gal.,i, 31.

to instruct his people by means of writings, and when others desired to have his books and asked him for them, he was in duty bound to furnish them, without ever pressing himself forward anywhere: just as other pastors and preachers also write books and sally forth upon the world with them, without forbidding any one to read them or compelling any one to teach their doctrines, and without sneaking into the folds of other pastors.[1] He thus recognizes, it will be observed, a "call of love" for literary activity in a wider sense than that in which we have heard him speak of such a call in connection with the relation of minister and congregation.

If Luther sought to restrain the public preaching of the Word within such narrow bounds, it was natural that he should denounce it far more severely when the multitude, or zealous, unauthorized individual leaders, sought to assail the current abuses in doctrine and worship with violent measures. For such denunciations Carlstadt had already given him urgent occasion. Luther had above all things desired that only the bare Word should be employed to gain the hearts of men. Where he had reason to believe that the Word had sufficiently accomplished this end, he allowed the anti-evangelical portions of the established forms of worship to be abolished by external statutes. Carlstadt's demands in regard to such matters sprung naturally from the two marked features of his general tendency which have been already noted. On the one hand, he claimed that the Spirit should work unhindered in all and break forth openly, and yet, at the same time, that this violent outbreak should be guided by the examples and commandments of the Old Testament. Luther, on the contrary, while rejecting in general all ecclesiastical authorization or special call as justifying such conduct, refused also to recognize Mosaism as furnishing it any support. He did not even find such (blind) zeal allowed within the sphere of Mosaism itself while the latter was in force. Wherever, he asserts, God commands the people to do any particular thing, as, *e. g.*, to destroy the idols, He does not seek to have it done by the multitude without the regular authorities, but by the authorities together with the people. The work was conducted, not by the multitude, but by the authorities.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxix, 256. Upon the privileges of the doctorate, Comm. ad. Gal., i. 31.

The Gospel, according to Luther, gives to the individual no authority whatever for such outward demonstrations. Thus it belongs, he holds, to the constituted authorities alone, to whom this office has been committed, to keep oversight over the whole matter of external obedience to the divine will and to adopt external legal measures. The immediate consequence of Carlstadt's principle would be, in the opinion of Luther, that we should be compelled to allow the multitude, whom we should thus permit to make one law of God, liberty to make others also; and that thus all governmental authority would be destroyed.[1]

We reserve for our closing Book a historical review of the more specific principles which Luther, in the course of time, enunciated for the direction of such reformatory activity upon the part of the government within the sphere of ecclesiastical affairs.

Section II. Opposition to Theories of the Lord's Supper Advanced by Zwingli and Œcolampadius.

Introductory—Relation of Zwinglian Views to those of the Fanatics.

In so far as Luther was called upon to contend, within the territory of the Reformation, for the necessity of the external Word of God, infant baptism, and a proper call as a pre-requisite for official labor in the Church, he had to deal with a general view and tendency which reached essentially its full culmination in the fanatical agitations originating at the close of the year 1521 and in the developments immediately connected with them.

The case was different with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. It is not difficult, indeed, to point out a relationship between the point of view occupied by Zwingli and Œcolampadius and that of the Fanatics. There was one general interest inspiring and guiding the former, which lay also at the basis of the theories of Carlstadt and other "fanatical spirits." Luther points it out to us when he feels authorized and compelled, from *his* point of view, to condemn them all alike as being "altogether too evangelical," and always crying, "Spirit! Spirit!" It was, that is to say, an interest in the preservation of the spiritual

[1] Erl. Ed., xxix, 146 sqq., 162 sq. Briefe, ii, 657. Already in 1522 appeared Luther's Warning against Insurrection. Erl. Ed., xxii, 43 sqq.

character of the Gospel and of the administration of salvation, as they conceived these, in opposition to a new binding and degradation of the divine to external earthly ceremonies, such as seemed to them to threaten under the teachings of Luther. But, however decidedly we may judge an Œcolampadius and a Zwingli as being also in error in their advocacy of this interest, yet in how much purer a form, at least, did that interest find expression in them than in the rampant fanaticisms of others. How false it would be to maintain that it was essentially the very same spirit which inspired these two parties, and that the only difference between them in regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper lay simply in the particular interpretation of the words of institution by which they respectively sought to disprove the presence of the body and blood of Christ! Luther himself insists that all these spirits must be tested by their practical fruits. He then thinks that he recognizes in Œcolampadius precisely the same spirit as in Carlstadt and even Münzer, and anxiously infers that the same spirit must still give rise to the same disorders—must remain murderous and insurrectionary.[1] But who will *now* dare to say that the similarity of the tree has been thus actually proved by the similarity of the fruit? And could any such affiliation have been even thought of as a possibility between Luther and a Carlstadt, or a Münzer, as that which was afterwards brought about between the former and the adherents of the Swiss Reformation, and which, although not fruitful of lasting results, was for a considerable time zealously and hopefully cultivated by Luther himself?

Luther's apprehension of the new doctrine touching the Lord's Supper was very profoundly influenced, as was remarked at the opening of the present chapter, by the intimate relation in which it stood, as first presented to his view, with that of Carlstadt. But the means to which the new opponents—very differently from a Carlstadt—resorted in theological assault upon him, called forth upon his part a new and rich exposition and authentication of his doctrine. Very significant, finally, in revealing his position, is the extent to which he at first yielded to the attempts at reconciliation; and, none the less, the way in which he at last denounced the stiff-necked Zwinglians.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 136, 138.

1. *First Public Criticism of the Views of Zwingli and Œcolampadius.*

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES—LETTER TO STRASSBURGERS—"SIGNIFIES"—SYNGRAMMA—GIFT IN SACRAMENT—THE WORD BRINGS THE BODY—REAL VS. IDEAL PARTICIPATION—BODILY PRESENCE IN HEAVEN AND IN SACRAMENT—COMMUNION OF SAINTS—LUTHER'S ATTITUDE.

The letter of Luther in which he says that Zwingli has adopted Carlstadt's view of the sacrament[1] was written already in the year 1524. It was only in the following year that Zwingli and Œcolampadius publicly announced their doctrine upon the Lord's Supper. He regards it as a circumstance calculated to awaken suspicion against both, that this opinion, according to which the body and blood are not supposed to be present, had first been advanced by Carlstadt. They even, he declares, despite all their earnest disavowals, yet really are themselves constantly falling back upon the very arguments which the latter employs. Already he detects also other fundamental errors in Zwingli. He admonishes the ministers at Strassburg to note how far Zwingli goes in his deliverances concerning original sin. In this, he doubtless refers to that conception of original sin in which it appears as a mere fault, and not as real sin, and in which, as is implied in earlier utterances of Zwingli in regard to children, it does not in itself embrace liability to eternal punishment. Then, too, he sees new leaders constantly appearing in the "Sect of the Sacramentarians." There are already six, says he in the spring of 1526, and the seventh may perhaps soon come. We can trace, among those whom he mentions, after the first three, *i. e.*, Carlstadt, Zwingli and Œcolampadius, especially Schwenkfeld and Krautwald; his designation of the others is not perfectly clear. This multiplicity of the attempts to interpret the real presence out of the words of institution was to him an evidence, not alone of the wide dissemination of the poison, but also, and especially, of the essentially untenable nature of the view itself.[2]

He did not as yet issue any publication directed expressly

[1] Cf. supra, p. 71.

[2] Briefe, ii, 571; iii. 36, 42, 81 sq., 98 (cf., as to the Petrus Florus here mentioned, Briefe, vi, 615, Anm. 10). Erl. Ed., lxv, 181 sq.

against the new opponents. He briefly discusses the arguments of Zwingli and Œcolampadius, however, in the *Letter to the Strassburgers* in 1525. His counter-arguments here are in the line of those which we have already met in his treatise prepared for the Bohemians and in that directed against the Heavenly Prophets. He demands that the Zwinglian interpretation of the "is," as equivalent to "signifies," be specially proved to be applicable to the words of institution. That this interpretation finds illustration also in 1 Cor. x. 4, he again disproves as he had done in controversy with Carlstadt. Zwingli had quoted, as a further example, Ex. xii. 11: "Eat it (the passover-lamb), for it is the Lord's Passover," claiming that the lamb here "signifies" the Passover. Luther, in reply, holds the meaning to be: "Eat, do all this, for this is the day of the Passover, or passing-over of the Lord." He would grant the sense of "signify" in the words, "This cup is the new testament," if the other words, "in my blood," did not stand in immediate connection. Thus it is evident that the cup in itself is nothing, but by virtue of the blood it is really the testament, since the blood could not have been offered without the cup. The difference between himself and the Sacramentarians appears to him so immense (*gewaltig*), that either he or they must be the servants of Satan. The idea had already been advocated among the Strassburgers, that believers should be advised to turn their thoughts away from the whole question of the presence of the body, and "exercise" themselves only "in the Word and faith." Of this, Luther will hear nothing. Among us, says he, the Word is not without that of which it speaks, nor faith without that in which it believes. Moreover, this counsel comes too late. We cannot turn the minds of the people away from the question after the opponents have published so many books upon it.[1]

The first testimony of Luther against the new theory which appeared in print was in a publication made by others, *i. e.*, the SYNGRAMMA of the Swabian ministers, directed mainly against Œcolampadius. The *Prefaces* for two German editions of this work in the year 1526 were from his hand.[2]

It does not belong to our present task, nor have we the neces-

[1] Briefe, iii, 44 sq., 47.

[2] Erl. Ed., lxv, 179 sqq. Luther mentions a second edition of the work already on Feb. 13, 1526: Briefe, iii, 93.

sary space, to examine this work and, by an exhaustive analysis of it, reach a decision as to the comparative merits of the various estimates which have recently been placed upon it. There will always remain some points of obscurity in connection with it, originating evidently in the position occupied at that time by the authors, among whom Brentz wielded the pen. But only misconception of the language employed can fail to recognize that, at all events, the authors, like Luther, also lay the whole stress upon the *gift* which is bestowed in the Lord's Supper, and that they seek to fix attention upon this as the body of Christ, truly present in the sacrament. And it is, further, easily to be seen, that the way and manner in which they conceived of this presence differed in essential respects from that doctrinal form which had then aready become so firmly established in the mind of Luther.

The aim of the *Syngramma* is directed against Œcolampadius, who regarded the bread as a mere figure of the body of Christ. The Swabian ministers see in the rise of this theory a scheme of the devil, who seeks by this means to snatch away from believers the true body of Christ. And the efficient cause (*Ursache*), on account of which the bread is no more bare bread, but, while remaining bread, is at the same time the body of Christ, is for them, as for Luther, the divine Word which is added to (comes to) the bread at the celebration of the Supper. Not only do they here, with Luther, approve the old maxim: "*accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*"; but it is evident that the discussions of the subject by Luther himself have had a determining influence upon them. Just as they now appeal to the power of God, by virtue of which the body of Christ becomes present through the Word, so have we heard Luther, shortly before, directing his hearers to the "divine, almighty" words. Compared with the relation existing in other cases, as in that of the brazen serpent, between the Word and outward sensible objects, the similar relation in the Lord's Supper was conceived by them as follows: The serpent remains a serpent, but has healing power by virtue of the Word which is connected with it; and just as, in this case, the Word has brought with it to the serpent the healing power, so the body itself is brought into the bread through the Word: "This is my body." Even in the manner in which the analogy between the Old Testament signs of grace and the Sacrament of the Altar is described, and, at the

same time, the peculiarity of the latter as distinguished from the former, the *Syngramma* harmonizes with the earlier representations of Luther. Still further, the blessing bestowed by the Lord's Supper by virtue of the accompanying words is placed, as by Luther, in the comforting of the conscience, whose *sins are remitted* in accordance with the gracious promise *of the Word*. The blood presented in the cup is declared also to be a *pledge* and *seal* of the New Testament, which latter consists just in the forgiveness of sins. In the words of institution, "This is my blood of the New Testament," it is not a bare sign of the blood that is spoken of, but the blood itself is a sign and seal of the eternal happiness secured.[1]

Yet even here already we must not fail to observe a difference between these writers and Luther. Whenever he calls the attention of believers to the words of institution, he lays stress upon them especially as offering to faith, by virtue of the "given for you," the remission of sins. The Swabians fix the attention chiefly upon the relation of the words to the body, which they through and in themselves bring with them. The fact that the words bring the remission of sins is with them more of a secondary consideration. "The Word brings to the bread that which it contains in itself; but it contains the truly corporeal body (*corpus Christi vere corporale*) of Christ."

This efficacy the Word of the sacrament, according to the *Syngramma*, possesses in common with all the divine words of the gospel proclamation. The maxim: The Word brings with it what it contains in itself, is of universal application. Thus, in the words of Christ, "Peace be with you," peace and forgiveness are actually present; and this is effected by the same power by which the body and blood are present in the bread and wine. Thus God Himself is present through His Word. Yea, thus the true body and blood of Christ are already brought into the hearts of men by the bare Word. When Christ said, "My body is given for you," etc., He, so to speak, locked up in this Word His body and His blood: "for if the Word alone is of such energy, and brings to us the corporeal body of Christ, *i. e.* that body which is given for us, why should it not retain the same energy when it accompanies the bread and the cup?"[2]

[1] Walch, xx, 692, 694, 674, 677, 673, 675, 687 sq.

[2] In Walch, pp. 677, 698 sq.

But do the words of institution, according to all the above, really bring with them for *every recipient of the sacrament* the body and blood of Christ? With the answer to this question, the difference between the doctrine of Luther and that of the *Syngramma* becomes at length a direct contradiction. The answer of the latter is dictated immediately by the comparison of the words of institution and their power with the words of God in general, and by the peculiar way in which their power is here conceived to act. With the Word, we are told, follows the real (*wahrhaftig*) thing which is indicated by the Word. But it follows, as the *Syngramma* everywhere presupposes, only for those who have the susceptibility required for the reception of the Word, *i. e.*, for believers. The authors speak, in the passage above cited, of an engrafting upon the heart; and this, they say, occurs through the words, when the latter are apprehended by *faith*. The body and blood of Christ are so included (locked up) in the words, "that whoever grasps and believes and holds this Word in faith, grasps * * * the true body and true blood of Christ, *i. e.*, not spiritual blood, but that carnal blood that was shed for us." To the proposition, that the Word makes God present, is appended the second thesis, *i. e.*, that *faith*, in believing, makes God present—but faith without the Word is said to be no faith. In exactly the same way, we find also the presence of the body in the Lord's Supper spoken of. The *Syngramma* knows here also no other kind of participation than that which is realized wherever in other ways the body and blood of Christ, or, in general, His person, or God Himself, is brought near to us. It knows nothing of a participation merely with the mouth, which is supposed, as the body is brought through the Word into the bread, to be consummated in the case of every recipient of the bread, and to which is then to be added, in the case of the believing recipient, also the spiritual participation. It knows nothing of that which Luther calls bodily participation, but only that which he designates a spiritual eating of the body. The distinction between the view here advocated and that of Luther becomes very clearly manifest when we find the objects presented in the sacrament differentiated in such statements as the following: That which we eat, *i. e.*, the bread, goes into the stomach, but that which we believe, goes into the soul. We may, indeed, speak of an *eating* of the body of Christ; that is, we may

attribute to the body that which belongs to the bread, *i. e.*, eating and chewing, just as Christ speaks of His body as being broken, although this is a characteristic *not of the body* but *only of the bread*. The manner in which the body itself is thus appropriated is then again described as analogous to that in which the preached Word is appropriated. It is, in both instances, a reception adapted to the organ which is here brought into consideration, *i. e.*, faith. "Just as faith receives in accordance with its own nature the Word which is caught by the ears, so also the body, which is received with the bread, is appropriated in accordance with the nature of faith (*pro ratione fidei*). In answer to the question, how that which is bodily (body and blood) can become the object of such an appropriation, a comparison is drawn with wine, which, when placed in a vessel impregnated with sulphur, becomes sulphurous. Just as it comes to pass through the nature of sulphur that the wine becomes sulphurous, so it is said to come to pass through the nature of faith, which is a spiritual nature, that the body is truly received into the heart, or spiritually appropriated, and thus, "*assumitur pro ratione fidei*." Of a reception of the body of Christ into the body of the communicant, and, further, even into that of the unbelieving communicant, the *Syngramma* evidently knows nothing. That which may and should enter into man in the reception of the sacrament is nothing else than that which enters into him also in the appropriation indicated in John vi. The distinction which Luther always made in this respect between the Lord's Supper and the experience described in John vi. does not here exist.[1]

It might be asked, what significance, according to all the above, attaches to the Lord's Supper by virtue of the fact that the Word here also brings the body "into the bread," beyond that of any other presentation of Christ and His body, when the Word comes to man of itself, alone, without the bread. The present work does not enter upon any explanation of this problem. We can say no more than that the outward, sensible element, in which, in the case of the sacrament, faith is through the Word to find the body, serves in a peculiar way for the incitement and confirmation of faith; just as, even in the illustrations drawn above from the Old Testament, the external object already

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 393.

had this value, and as, according to Luther himself, the spiritual participation, which he by no means confines to the Lord's Supper, but which he presents as there additional to the bodily participation, is promoted by the visible outward element.[1]

We might be inclined to interpret the *Syngramma* as regarding the participation of faith as spiritual in the sense, that it is a merely ideal, as opposed to a real, participation. In favor of this might be quoted a yet more sweeping comment of the book upon the significance of words in general. Words, it says,[2] bring with them the inner objects, or the things of the mind (*Gemüth*: soul), of which they speak, and as soon as they find lodgment within us (*in uns haften*), we are accustomed to say: "Now I have it." Is this, it might naturally be asked, a *real having*, and not merely a having in imagination, in apprehension, in devout contemplation? Is not thus, in the bread of the sacrament, the crucified body of Christ, or His atoning sufferings and death, only somewhat more impressively made *ideally* present to us? The same inference might be drawn from the fact, that the emphasis is so often and strongly laid in the Lord's Supper upon the bodily character, the carnality, of the body and blood (cf. *supra*: *sanguinem non spiritualem sed carnalem*),[3] and not upon the body as it now actually exists in its glorified state. Is not, it may be asked, according to this, the body made present as it once was, and as it suffered, and as it still presents itself to the believing remembrance of the sacred scenes of old, but as it in reality is now no more? But the zeal with which the *Syngramma* insists directly upon the true presence, and the opposition to Œcolampadius, which constitutes the aim of the entire work, leave no room for such an interpretation of its language. Such a conception did not lie in the mind of the authors. The latter, even in the other words cited, which offer Christ to faith, always think of a true entrance of Christ into the believer, without stopping to reflect that the "I have it" is yet, in other cases, also commonly used in the other sense. We can charge upon them even here, therefore, nothing more than a lack of clearness in definition and in the discrimination of the various elements and questions involved. That the above-suggested inference from

[1] Walch, 677 (Introd. 38), 698 (Introd. 38), 713 (Introd. 38).

[2] Walch, 702–3.

[3] Also, Walch, 684–5.

the "carnality" of the body would be a false one, will, moreover, very soon become still more manifest.

The *Syngramma* agrees again with Luther in its reply to the question, whether Christ does not then remain in heaven. He remains, it declares, in heaven, although He is at the same time, by virtue of His command and Word, distributed among His followers on earth. He is ascended to heaven and is *everywhere*, in such a sense that He is also, as He Himself says, with us unto the end of the world. He comes to us, and yet remains at the right hand of God, *i. e.*, "in all places in heaven and on earth." The Holy Spirit, also, is in the saints below, and, united with Christ, at the right hand of the Father. Why should it then be thought a strange assertion that the deified body of Christ likewise comes through the Word into the bread, and yet, at the same time, remains at the right hand of God? It will be observed that the body is here thought of as in its present glorified state. Attention is also distinctly directed to the difference between the presence of the Divine in Word and sacrament and the general omnipresence of God and Christ, in an earlier passage, in which, when speaking of the presence as effected through the Word, it is said: "We speak not of the presence according to which God is in all things." It is evidently the purpose here to make the same discrimination in reference to which Luther afterwards more definitely declared: The presence through the Word is that by virtue of which God is not only objectively present, but also wishes Himself to be actually apprehended by faith and taken up into the individual.[1]

The significance of the sacrament, finally, in so far as the communion of saints is presented in it, is represented in the way in which Luther understood it, *i. e.*: Not only for the strengthening of faith, but also as a sign of unity, has the Lord ordained that it be distributed to the Church. The "communion of the body of Christ" is to be understood of this distribution to the community of believers (cf. Luther's utterances above cited). Like Luther, too, the *Syngramma* contends against the idea, that by the body itself we are to understand the congregation. Like him, it appeals, in refutation of such a theory, to the fact that this body is "given for us." In the opposition to this idea, especially,

[1] Walch, 701–2, 717, 698,

appears to lie the explanation of the ardor with which the treatise everywhere seeks to hold to the true bodily nature, or carnality, of the body.[1]

It has been necessary for us to thus fully present the thoughts of this publication, prepared by other hands than Luther's, in order to comprehend and rightly estimate the attitude which he assumed toward it.

He not only allowed it to be presented to the world with a commendatory preface from his hand, but he constantly in his letters expressed his approval of it, as an excellent defence of the pure faith touching the sacrament. He writes: "It is wonderful how the little book pleases (me)." He declares, in the first preface, that the *Syngramma* pleases him so well that he would be willing to translate it into German himself. The second preface says: "This excellent little book I like the better the longer I know it, because I know how they are assailing it, and yet accomplishing nothing by their assaults; for it is truth, and puts the lies to shame." [2]

Yet we know how far the contents of the book varied from his own theory—that it could, despite the praise bestowed upon it, by no means be said of all the statements which it contained, that he adopted them as expressing his own views.[3] It is inconceivable also, that he, while bestowing so much attention upon it, should not himself have become aware of the variations referred to. We cannot, therefore, but regard it as significant that he should, in all his references to it of which we have any knowledge, have ignored these differences, to rejoice only in the valuable aid of men like-minded in the struggle against the common foes. The decisive consideration, however, in awakening this sense of fellowship with them, was beyond doubt the zeal with which they maintained the character of the sacrament as a divine, objective, real gift of grace, as over against which the part of the individual participating is but a receptive faith. It has been very justly remarked, that Luther had here to deal with a form of doctrinal conception with which, among all the theories of the age of the Reformation, that of Calvin was most nearly related. Yet, when

[1] Walch, 702.

[2] Briefe, iii, 93, 95, 98, 202. Erl. Ed., lxv, 180, 186.

[3] Vid. Luther himself, Briefe, iii, 202.

this has been said, it must be at once further remarked, that the bodily participation, for which the *Syngramma* leaves no room, is yet not in express terms rejected by it—that the question which was to lead to division even among the common opponents of Zwingli and Œcolampadius was here, as yet, hidden from view in the imperfect analysis of the subject.

2. *Further Controversial Writings Preceding the Conciliatory Negotiations with Bucer.*

Upon the two prefaces to the *Syngramma* followed, shortly afterward, A. D. 1526, the first independent publication of Luther against the doctrine there controverted, namely the

a. DISSERTATION, OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST, AGAINST THE FANATICAL SPIRITS (*Sermon von dem Sacrament des Leibes und Blutes Christi wider die Schwarmgeister*).

OBJECT TO BE GRASPED BY FAITH—OBJECTIONS: BODILY PRESENCE INCONGRUOUS AND UNNECESSARY—BENEFITS OF SACRAMENT: PARTICULAR, MEMORIAL, PROMOTIVE OF BROTHERLY LOVE.

He opens the discussion with the statement, that there are two principal things which must be considered in regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The first is the *Object* (*objectum*) *of Faith, i. e.*, "the work, or thing, which we believe, or to which we are to cling"—the sacrament in and of itself, as it is externally presented to us—the presence of the body and blood as an object of faith. The other is *Faith* itself, the proper attitude of the heart toward the sacrament, or, in general, the proper use of it. Of the former, he says that he has hitherto not preached much, but rather of the latter alone. This he even now calls "the best." But, inasmuch as the former is now assailed by many, he feels compelled to say something also about it. Thus he has himself, it will be seen, noted the modification which had occurred in his presentation of doctrine—not now, indeed, for the first time, but at the very beginning of the sacramental controversy invoked by Carlstadt. That he had hitherto preached only of the second aspect of the doctrine was, indeed, an extravagant statement; but it reveals to us clearly his own con-

sciousness of having never made the first aspect a special subject in his preaching. On the other hand, he evidently does not now entertain the slightest suspicion that his doctrine, or view, upon the former aspect of the subject may have undergone any material change.

In the first preface to the *Syngramma*, Luther had indicated "two arguments of error" among the Sacramentarians in regard to the object of faith in connection with the Lord's Supper: 1. *It seems to reason an almost unbecoming thing*. 2. It is *unnecessary*, *i. e.*, that Christ's body and blood should be in the bread and wine. Or, to state the arguments briefly, they are: 1. Absurdity. 2. No necessity. Thus the document before us, undertaking to speak of the "*objectum fidei*," treats these two points consecutively.

It is claimed by the opponents, that the presence of the body of Christ in the bread "is not suitable" (*sollte sich nicht schicken*). It is said to be a miracle contradicting the senses, that the one body of Christ should be thus present at a hundred thousand places. But Luther finds equally great miracles, not only in the incarnation of God, but even in ordinary creature life. There is, for instance, the one soul in the whole body and in the smallest member of the body, so that if we pierce the latter, the whole soul is affected and the whole man shudders. Out of one grain grows the stalk with so many grains. One weak, perishable human voice is caught, whole and undivided, by each one of a thousand ears upon which it falls. If our spoken word can thus distribute itself, how much more can not Christ do the same with His glorified body? From this comparison, Luther proceeds to observe further, that the one Christ Himself—precisely with His bodily voice, *i. e.*, the preaching of the Gospel—is brought into so many hearts (cf. the *Syngramma*). Here, we must say, we have the true Christ. The heart feels His presence, through the experience of faith, without our knowing how it is effected. He sits at once at the right hand of the Father, and also in the believing heart; and the believing heart itself is thus also truly in heaven, being where He is. Should it then be astonishing, he asks, that Christ should bring Himself into the bread and into the wine? Is not the heart much more subtile than the bread? The pregnancy of the Virgin Mary is also adduced in illustration. This occurred through the words which the angel spoke to her,

and which she apprehended and believed. With these, Christ came, not only into her heart, but also into her body, the power coming in this case through the Word. Thus also in the sacrament: as soon as Christ says, "This is my body," His body is present through the Word and through the power of the Holy Ghost; the words bring with them to the bread that of which they speak (cf. *Syngramma*). Luther then, at length, as in his discussion with Carlstadt, takes up the passage, Eph. i. 20 sqq., adding now to it also Eph. iv. 7 sq. According to these declarations, he says, Christ is placed above all creatures and fills all things. This he refers not only to the divinity of Christ, but, in precisely the same way, to the humanity inseparable from the divinity; and this involves for him the assurance that *Christ is also according to His humanity a Lord of all things, that He has all things in His hand, that He is everywhere present.* He finds no further signification than this in the state of Christ as ascended to heaven, and His sitting at the right hand of God. "This is what it means, that He is above all created things, and in and beyond all created things." It is just this truth of which the bodily, visible ascension of the Lord is to be an attestation. The appearance to the eye of Stephen of Christ standing at the right hand of God is also again cited, as in the treatise against Carlstadt; and he now declares, further, that Stephen did not need to lift his eyes high to see Christ, for He is about us, and in us, and at all places.

Thus positively asserted and distinctly marked do we now find in Luther this view of the mode of existence of the God-man, which we have already seen him, in his writings against Carlstadt, utilize in brief form for the defence of the sacramental presence of the glorified body, and which is fully developed, as the basis of that doctrine, in the controversial writings immediately following. Yet *this* presence is not an immediate inference from the ubiquity of Christ. The essential peculiarity of this sacramental presence consists in the fact, that Christ is here present according to His humanity, not only in the sense in which He is present everywhere, but that He may here be with certainty found and laid hold of by us; for although He is also present everywhere else, He yet does not wish us to "grope about everywhere after Him." And this willingness to be found, on the part of Christ, is made dependent upon His Word. We do not draw Him down

from heaven by His words which we speak at the celebration of the Supper; but they are given to us as an assurance that we know certainly how and where to find Him. Thus He does not at all wish me to look for Him anywhere without the Word, although He is certainly everywhere in all created things, even in stone, fire and water. Otherwise, I tempt God, and practice idolatry. But still more definitely is the presence in the sacrament now at once defined, and with this we are brought to face again the difference between his teaching and that of the *Syngramma*. It is now more distinctly His body and blood which Christ "connects (*anbindet*) with the Word in bread and wine;" and He connects it in such a way that we are to receive it here also *bodily*. This means, further, for Luther, as we already know, that the body and blood enter with the bread and wine into the bodies of all, even the unworthy communicants, in the reception of this bread and wine.

Luther makes very short work with the second argument of the opponents, *i. e.*, that the presence in the Supper "is not necessary," declaring bluntly that they therein attempt to vanquish God and Christ. If God says it is necessary, all creatures must keep silent. He challenges them to explain why it was necessary for God, who has sin, death and the devil in His power, to send His Son, and suffer Him to die for our deliverance; or why God feeds us with bread, when He could do so with His bare Word, etc. Although he discourages all attempts to establish a *necessity* in this case, he yet, in the second part of the work, presents a number of important points in illustration of the *benefits* of this presence *to us*.

For example, after having, first of all, secured due recognition for the Object of Faith, or, to use his own expression, "preserved the treasure, and not suffered the kernel to be extracted from the shell"—he is now ready to preach again upon the other feature of the doctrine, *i. e.*, upon the proper use and reception of the sacrament. He thus opposes, here as heretofore, as well the old error which makes a meritorious work out of the sacrament, as, especially, the new teachers of error, according to whom it is a bare badge, by which Christians may be recognized. He insists again upon the words: "My body, *which is given for you*." He locates the right use of the sacrament in the faith—not only that Christ is present with body and blood, but that He is *here*

bestowed upon me, and bestowed, moreover, for the forgiveness of sins, which the death of Christ has secured for us. And at this point we are brought in the *Sermon* to yet more definite utterances concerning the *significance* which the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ has *for our salvation*. The entire stress seems at first to be here laid upon the *body itself* which is received in the sacrament. This is said to be bestowed upon us for (*zur*) forgiveness. Even, says Luther, if the words, "given for you," did not stand there, as they are actually lacking in Paul's account, yet thou hast still the body which died for thy sins. "*But when Christ is bestowed upon thee, the forgiveness of sins is also bestowed, and everything which has been secured through the* (objective) *treasure*." Nevertheless, if we look more closely, we will observe that the *Word* even here still retains the place hitherto accorded to it by Luther, not only in that it is according to this Word, and by virtue of it (as we have seen above), that the body and blood of Christ are present, but, especially, in that it is the Word itself in which, according to the institution of the sacrament, the forgiveness of sins is directly offered to us. Thus Luther declares, in the process of the argument, that, as it is particularly needful for a Christian to know, first of all, that Christ has given His flesh to the agony upon the cross in order that it might be a "treasure" for us and bring us help in the forgiveness of our sins, so this principal thing is here presented to us also *in the words*. He adds also: As a *token* and *guarantee* there is given to us here *in addition* His body and blood for bodily reception. In accordance with this, evidently, must we interpret the above declaration, that the body and blood are here given to us for the forgiveness of sins—and in accordance with this, likewise, must we conceive as mediated the forgiveness deduced from the partaking of the body. The sacrament thus, for Luther, takes its place by the side of the general preaching of the forgiveness secured by the death of Christ: "Christ has accomplished it *once* upon the cross, but allows it to be distributed daily to us anew through preaching." But he now, with emphasis, presents it as the peculiarity of the sacramental distribution, that, although the same thing is found in preaching as in the sacrament, yet there is in the latter case this advantage, *i. e.*, that it is directed to certain persons. In public preaching it is given to no one in particular, but he may take it

who will. But in the sacrament, it is appropriated to each single person. The body and blood of Christ are bestowed upon every one, in order that he may have the forgiveness secured by the death of Christ and preached in the congregation. The peculiarity of the sacrament is, therefore, the definite individual application of the forgiveness distributed through the Word—an application, moreover (wherein it differs from that in confession and private absolution), in which, in addition to the Word, the body and blood are also given to each—given as a "token and guarantee" for that which lies already in the Word—as the strongest possible certification to faith, which must receive the latter, first of all, from the Word.[1]

Whilst firmly maintaining this as the fundamental significance of the Lord's Supper, the *Sermon* yet recognizes the latter also as a *memorial* and *proclamation of the death* of Christ. "Herein lies the conclusion of the matter: first, that we here take to ourselves, as a gift, the forgiveness of sins; and secondly, that we then preach and proclaim the same."

Luther finally names again, and that as the "fruit of the sacrament," *Love*, in view of which the ancient Fathers described it as *communio*, or fellowship (*Gemeinschaft*). This feature is presented to us, first in the *example of love* given by Christ in His death, and then in the figure, or sign, of the bread composed of many grains and the wine made from many grapes.

Thus, says he, every believer may apprehend in the sacrament the entire system of Christian doctrine, namely, what the Christian should believe, *i. e.*, the delivering up of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, and what the Christian should do by faith.

The two "arguments" against which Luther contended in this *Sermon*, he regarded, from the very first, as nothing more than presumptuous suggestions of reason, encroaching upon a sphere that does not belong to it. But his opponents made earnest attempts to furnish the scriptural proof of their positions which he demanded. A reply of the Reformer, devoted mainly to the supposed arguments from this quarter, is furnished in a publication of A. D. 1527, to which we now turn our attention.

[1] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 345, 348, 392 sq. Supra, p. 81 sq.

b. "THAT THESE WORDS OF CHRIST: THIS IS MY BODY, ETC., STILL STAND SECURE, AGAINST THE FANATICAL SPIRITS." (*Dass diese Worte Christi, das ist mein Leib, u. s. w., noch feststehen, wider die Schwarmgeister.*)[1]

RIGHT HAND OF GOD EVERYWHERE—CHRIST IN THE BREAD—CHRIST TO BE APPREHENDED WHERE REVEALED—JOHN V. 63 NOT APPLICABLE—SPIRITUAL AND BODILY EATING—MOUTH AND HEART—PATRISTIC TESTIMONY—SACRAMENTARIAN CELEBRATIONS.

He here begins with the words of institution, as given by Matthew and Mark. He refutes, as he had before briefly done in the Strassburg letter, the argument for the figurative interpretation based upon such passages as 1 Cor. x. 4; Ex. xii. 11; John xv. 1. But, granting that the exegetical support of the views of his opponents should prove untenable, is not the teaching of other portions of Scripture, and are not the *remaining articles of the Christian faith*, opposed to the view, that Christ's body and blood are actually in bread and wine? Thus it was maintained by the opponents. Again there were two principal arguments which Luther had to meet, namely, (1) The two statements, *i. e.*, that Christ, as the Scriptures and faith declare, is in heaven, and that His body is in the Lord's Supper; and (2) That, as, according to John vi. 63, "the flesh profiteth nothing," Christ can therefore not give us His flesh to eat in the Lord's Supper. Luther now proposes to overturn both these "corner-stones" of the "fanatical spirits," without paying any attention to the "many other loose arguments," which they are accustomed to produce.

The first point brings us at once back again to the doctrine of the *Person of Christ*, which the above *Sermon* had already advanced against the first argument of the Sacramentarians there treated of. We find now a full development of the doctrine touching the "RIGHT HAND OF GOD," or the omnipresence of God and Christ. The present document and that which follows it, *Grosses Bekenntniss vom Abendmahl Christi*, afford us the chief discussions of Luther upon the subject. These are, as no opponent even should attempt to deny, magnificent and pro-

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx. 14–151.

found portraitures of the divine existence and activity, full of spirit and life. They display the most sincerely pious and Christian endeavor to apprehend as deeply as possible the unity into which the divine entered with the human in the person of the Redeemer. It is another question, whether the bold flight of ideas has been sufficiently regulated in accordance with the requirements of a sharp definition and distinction of the various elements in that which constitutes the substantial content of the religious and Christian consciousness.

It is, according to Luther, a childish notion, that there is a golden throne in heaven, upon which Christ sits beside the Father. The Scriptures do not bind the right hand of God to any place. His right hand is His almighty power, which cannot be anywhere—is enclosed in no single place-—and yet, at the same time, is essentially present in all places, even in the smallest leaf upon the tree, even as He by this power creates, brings to pass, and upholds all things. But if He creates and upholds all things, He must also Himself *be* where they are (Isa. lxvi. 1; Acts xvii. 27 sq.; Rom. xi. 36, etc.). His majesty may be present, and that really (*wesentlich*), in, with and upon a grain of corn and through a grain of corn, within and without. And although it is one majesty, yet it can be entire and complete separately in the whole multitude of grains, without being itself divided. He is Himself above body, spirit, and everything of which man can conceive; and yet, at the same time, His own essence (being) is, entire and complete, separately in every creature. That, with the power of God, also "His divine nature (*Wesen*), or right hand, is everywhere," Luther proves, not only from the above passages of Scripture, but also from the very nature of the case, *i. e.*, from the original and unchangeable unity which exists in the Godhead. Since outside of created things there is nothing but "the one, simple Godhead," the power and hand of God were undoubtedly before the creation His nature itself; and, after the creation, they would certainly not have become anything else. God's power, arm, hand, nature, countenance, spirit, wisdom, etc., are all, according to Luther, one and the same thing. Even the Word of God is for him also the same as His power, since it was by His Word that God made all things. The power of God is thus not a kind of axe, with which He works, but it is He Himself. Inasmuch as

the power and Spirit of God are present in all things through and through, so must also His right hand, His essential nature, and His majesty be everywhere. God Himself must be at hand, if He is to do anything.

But all these utterances concerning God are already accompanied, in the mind of Luther, with a direct reference to Christ. If God is not bound to one place upon a golden throne in heaven, neither can Christ be so confined; for *out of Christ* there is no God, and where Christ is, there is the Godhead entire and complete (Col. ii. 9; John xiv. 9, 10). Again, our very faith and the testimony of Scripture, according to which the Godhead dwells bodily, entire and complete, in Christ, is an evidence for the fundamental doctrine, that the Godhead is, in general, not bound to any place. But there is, moreover, in Christ another presence of God, of a far greater and loftier kind than in any creature whatsoever. God not only *is* in Him, but *dwells* in Him, so that God and man become *one person*. Hence, we can say of created things only, "Here is God," and not, "This is God"; but *Christ is God Himself*.

We must, first of all, in Luther's reasoning upon this subject, note carefully such propositions as have in view the Godhead itself, which is in Christ. In this sense, he declares that it was necessary for Christ, the Son of God, inasmuch as He was to be conceived in the womb of Mary, to be already beforehand essentially and personally in the body of the Virgin and there assume humanity, since the Godhead is immovable and cannot pass from one place to another. Christ was beforehand already in the body of the Virgin, just as everywhere in all places, according to divine nature, mode and power. It is evident that this is not here said of the God-man, or of the incarnate Son, since the question under consideration is now how He became man. Yet, with this, it appears to have been also at once settled for Luther, that *after* the incarnation, the same which could be said of the presence of the Son of God might also be said of the entire indivisible person of the Incarnate One. And Luther's glance is here from the very beginning, and throughout the entire course of the discussion —just as in his appeal to Eph. ii. 23 when arguing against Carlstadt, fixed upon the Christ now exalted at the right hand of God, who in the Lord's Supper distributes His body and blood. From the very fact of Christ's being at the right hand of God,

upon which the opponents rested their denial of the presence of the body, that presence is now deduced: Where the right hand of God is, there must be the body and blood of Christ; and the right hand of God is, according to the evidence presented, in all places. Yet it is by no means the idea of Luther, that it is only since Christ's entrance through the ascension upon His present state of exaltation, that His human nature has attained to that fellowship with the divine by virtue of which such a presence is to be attributed to His body. Upon the contrary, although in his earlier writings Luther had, indeed, never definitely indicated the point of time since which the God-man has been filling all things, as described in Eph. i. 23, yet there can now, from the use made of John iii. 13, be no longer any doubt that he means all that is said of this presence to be considered as applicable, as well, to the time of Christ's earthly life. He declares that this latter announcement evidently relates to the Son of man as such, not to Christ in His divinity. Christ thereby ("the Son of man, who is in heaven") indicates that His body is at the same time in heaven and on earth—yea, in all places. By His glorification He did not become another person; but as He was before, so He now remains, everywhere present. Even in the *Church Postils*, we find in the *Sermon upon John iii. 1–15*, under the 13th verse, only the brief comment: "The Son of man came to the earth, and yet remained in heaven, and again went up to heaven, *i. e.*, He became a Lord over heaven and earth and all that in them is."[1] This scriptural utterance always remains for him a leading proof-passage for the propositions underlying his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In this sense, and with this application, he was accustomed to interpret the statement whenever he was led to quote it in his sermons or his exegesis. In the new and amended edition of the *Church Postils*, issued in 1543, instead of the above sermon appears another which presents the same interpretation.[2] The present document, however, enters no further into the consideration of the question concerning the state of Christ when on earth. It treats of Christology in detail just in so far as was necessary in order to establish the doctrine of the presence of the body of the exalted Christ in the Lord's Supper.

[1] Erl. Ed., xii, 390.

[2] Ibid., 423.

If we, then, scrutinize more closely Luther's conception of this presence in the Lord's Supper, we shall observe that, for him, the body and blood of Christ are upon all occasions in all places. Even had Christ, at the institution of the Supper, not employed the words, "This is my body," yet the words, "Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," would themselves still compel us to conclude that His body is there as well as everywhere else. There is hence no need of any transubstantiation. The body of Christ can be there without it, just as the right hand of God, which is in all things, must not, on that account, be transformed into all things. The presence of the body in the bread must be possible, just as well as the presence of the right hand of God, and of God Himself, in all created things. If God has found a way in which His nature can be in them all, entire and complete, and in every creature separately, and yet be surrounded and embraced by none, why should He "not also know a way in which His body might also be, entire and complete, at many places at once, and it yet be not proper to say of any one of these places, 'He is here?'" How shall we, miserable sons of men, undertake to judge Him according to our notions?

Luther here, as we observe, entertains no doubt arising from the distinction between a spiritual nature, such as God in Himself possesses purely and perfectly, and the form of existence characterizing a body, however intimately connected with God the latter may be. It is enough for him that this body is, according to the Scriptures, at the right hand of God. He further suggests: Body has, moreover, it is true, a resemblance to body, and they may fitly be associated with one another—as bread and wine are a body, and the flesh of Christ is a body. More difficult, therefore, for reason to understand than the presence of this body in the body of the bread, must appear the presence in all created things of the God who is exalted above body and spirit. Then follow the propositions noted above: If God can yet find a way to be in all these created things, how much more will He know the way for His body to be thus present. In the process of the argument, it is further claimed that, at all events, there are for God more ways in which one thing can be in another than the gross, material way in which wine is held in a vessel. Levi, for example, was in the loins of Abraham. We say of that which we see, that it is in our eye. All things may be in our hearts, etc.

It seems to him no more difficult to understand that one body should be at many places than that many bodies should be in one place. But the body of Christ was, in passing through the sealed stone of His sepulchre, for example, or through the closed door, in one and the same place with that through which He vanished. This leads the author to speak again of the presence *everywhere*. The disciples, he declares, did not see the risen Lord there enter, but they beheld Him as one who had been there already before they saw Him, but who now revealed Himself in their midst. In a similar way, also, do other appearances of God and Christ indicate that they both are not far from us, but near, and that their appearance to us is merely a *revelation* of their presence. This leads again to the citation of John iii. 13.

But, in connection with all these utterances of Luther in relation to the bodily presence, we must bear in mind his caution: "Although the body of Christ is in all places, yet thou canst not therefore at once lay hold upon it—unless He binds Himself fast to thee, and invites thee to a special table by His Word, and Himself points out to thee by His Word the bread, where (in which) thou shalt eat Him—which He, indeed, does in the Lord's Supper." For "that God should be present and that He should be present to thee, are two different things." Thus the right hand of God is everywhere, but to lay hold of it we are directed to the humanity of Christ; and thus the humanity of Christ, because it is at the right hand of God, is likewise also above and in all things—but we can take it only at the place to which the Word directs us. Wherever Christ has not thus "bound Himself fast," our experience can only be as with the rays of the sun: although they are so near to us and are so sensibly felt, yet we cannot, with all our grasping, catch them and store them in a casket.

Furthermore, Luther would not be understood as having, in what he has said as to Christ's being at the same time at the right hand of God and in the Lord's Supper, attempted to circumscribe the power of God, as though God had not also more ways than that here indicated for keeping a body in many places at once. "For," says he, "I believe His words, that He can do more than all the angels are able to understand; but I have pointed out one of these ways, in order to stop the mouths of the Fanatics and to justify our faith."

In the reply of Luther to the *second point, i. e.*, that drawn from the language of John vi. 63, we must note especially the more definite utterances in regard to the conception of the spiritual and the bodily eating and the difference between the two, as also in regard to the benefit to be secured from the bodily eating as such.

As compared with the discussion of this text in the argument against Carlstadt, we find nothing new in the interpretation of the word "flesh" as there employed. It is here only established with more care, that the body of Christ cannot be meant by the term. This is always impossible when, as here, flesh and spirit are opposed to one another; for the body and flesh of Christ harmonize very well with the spirit—yea, He is bodily the dwelling-place of the Spirit. It is the old Adam, with its disposition, understanding, will, etc., that is called flesh in contrast with spirit. Jesus wished to say, therefore, in this passage, that the understanding of His disciples was a carnal one, since they think of a bodily eating of flesh, just as when it is eaten with the teeth and digested in the body; and that all His words were spirit, and hence flesh and eating, and everything of which He spoke, were also spirit, and must be spiritually understood and employed. Thus there follows immediately for Luther here, from the "spiritual understanding" with which Jesus wishes His words to be received, the spiritual character also of the object of which He speaks. He then emphatically announces his acceptance of the principle, that the *bodily* eating of the flesh of Christ, which is not under consideration in John vi., but which is involved in the Lord's Supper, would, indeed, of itself alone, be of no benefit. He is willing to go further still, and declare that bodily eating without faith is poisonous and fatal. But he inquires how it would be if we should *bodily* eat the flesh of Christ in such a way as to *at the same time* eat it *spiritually*—that is, if we should eat the body bodily with the bread, and at the same time believe with the heart that it is the body given for us for the forgiveness of sins, which even the opponents call "spiritual eating." "Is there," says he, "a spiritual eating here? then must also the bodily eating be beneficial on account of the spiritual eating. The mouth, which bodily eats the flesh of Christ, does not, indeed, know what it is eating; nor would the eating, of itself, benefit the mouth, for it cannot comprehend the words. But the

heart knows well what the mouth is eating, for it comprehends the words and eats spiritually that which the mouth eats bodily. But since the mouth is an organ (*Gliedmass*) of the heart, it must also finally live to eternity on account of the heart, which lives forever through the Word; for the mouth here also eats bodily the same eternal food which the heart eats spiritually with it."

But the adversaries, says Luther, prattle much about spiritual eating, without knowing what either spiritual or bodily eating is. He will, therefore, speak further on the subject, for the sake of those who are in need of the instruction.

The question is not, he proceeds to say, as to any difference in the object which is eaten. The flesh of Christ is always, even when it is spiritually eaten, true, natural, bodily flesh. The object is not always spiritual, but the employment of it ought to be spiritual (*usus debet esse spiritualis*). Even the assertion of Luther, that the flesh spoken of in John vi. is spirit, does not mean that it ceases to be (Christ's) actual body, because it has a spiritual character and is "spiritual flesh." He now adduces illustrations in confirmation of his theory. Thus Christ, at His conception by the Virgin, became not only a spiritual being, but a real bodily man. But Mary at the same time, together with this bodily conception, through her faith in the word of the angel, received and bore Him also spiritually, and without this spiritual conception she would never have conceived Him bodily. God might, indeed, even without her knowledge, have formed the body of Christ within her body, as Eve was once formed from Adam; but she would then not have been the mother of Christ, as Adam was not the mother of Eve. Thus, also, the woman with the bloody flux touched the bodily garment of Christ, but at the same time she touched Him spiritually by the faith in her heart. Thus Abraham begat Isaac spiritually by his faith before his bodily generation, and received the power of bodily generation through the Word of divine promise. Thus, says Luther, everything which our body does externally, is spiritually done, if the Word accompanies it, and if it is done by faith. In short, everything is spiritual which is done in us or through us by the Spirit and faith, whether the thing in question be itself spiritual or bodily. The Lord's Supper has to do, therefore, with the actual, natural body of Christ, which is, indeed, peculiar, spiritual flesh. He is to be

partaken of spiritually also at other places than at the Supper, but there, both *bodily and spiritually*. "Whether the flesh of Christ," says he further, "be corporeally or spiritually eaten, His body is the same spiritual flesh, the same imperishable food, which is in the Lord's Supper eaten bodily with the mouth and spiritually with the heart—or eaten spiritually with the heart alone through the Word, as taught in John vi. Whether it enters the mouth or the heart, it is the same body."

If we seek to discover what is meant precisely by the "spiritual eating" here spoken of, whose object is said to be a body, we cannot, in view of the emphasis which is here also laid upon the conception of *eating*, persuade ourselves that it is for him only a sort of devout contemplation of the flesh, or humanity, of Christ, in which the object contemplated yet remains outside of the individual contemplating—or that it is merely a grasping in faith of that which has been accomplished for us by the suffering and death of the body of Christ. We shall observe again hereafter, in our systematic review, how deeply concerned was Luther to conceive in the most profound and real way the unification of faith with its object, with the personal Christ, with the inseparable humanity and divinity of Christ. The present document, moreover, bears the very strongest testimony to the inseparable union of the entire combined humanity and divinity of Christ in their omnipresence and, yet further, in their conjunction (*Gebundensein*) with the Word, to which Christ Himself binds Himself for the benefit of faith. *How* this occurs, however, or *how* the person of Christ, in so far as it is *corporeal*, can be thus eaten also spiritually, and so taken up into the heart, Luther does not attempt further to explain, nor to make comprehensible or clear to the understanding. He presents only the one leading thought which may be made available in this direction, *i. e.*, that the flesh of Christ has a peculiar, and that, too, a "spiritual" character. Here again we fail to find any more definite analysis of this spiritual character of the flesh of Christ, or its relation to the spirit of the individual receiving it. The points now at issue did not lead Luther to an examination of these features of the problem. He assumed that his opponents, although stumbling in the dark, so far as the conception of the spiritual and bodily participation was concerned, were yet sincere at least in their advocacy of the spiritual participation.

It became necessary, still further, in the controversy, to elucidate the question of the *significance and value of that bodily partaking* of the flesh which the opposing party entirely rejected.

We find here again a summary treatment of the objections similar to that already encountered. Addressing himself especially to Œcolampadius, Luther notices the two questions raised by the latter, *i. e.*, what is the benefit of the presence of the body in the Lord's Supper, and what is the necessity for it? To the second inquiry, he replies, first of all, that it is necessary for God's sake, in order that Christ may not become a liar in His words: "This is my body"; and necessary for the sake of our faith, in order that our faith may accord with the Word of God. The first "benefit" he pronounces to be, that shrewd spirits and reason may be blinded and brought to shame—the proud stumbling and falling and never partaking of the Supper of Christ, the humble, on the contrary, arising and alone partaking of the Supper. (As to the non-participation of the Sacramentarians, see p. 129 sq.)

Luther directs attention, further, to the value, or benefit, of the *Word*, which we have also likewise in the Supper. This is certainly, he declares, not useless, but is, on the contrary, a Word of life, grace, salvation, strength, etc., bringing and strengthening faith, overcoming sin, the devil, death, hell and all that is evil, and making us children and heirs of God. All this must, therefore, also be in the Lord's Supper. How, then, can men talk so rashly of the Lord's Supper, as though it were nothing but the flesh of cattle?

The above claim is made by Luther as setting forth the benefit which the very Word itself carries with it, and in view of which, if for no other reason, the Lord's Supper must be considered as in a general way beneficial. He is well aware, however, that the opponents press the question: "What is the benefit of the body of Christ, as such, in the bread?" To this particular question the document now before us addresses itself as no earlier writing of the Reformer has done, and gives a new turn to the correlated ideas in the theory of the Lord's Supper.

The *Sermon* which we last examined had merely made brief mention of a bestowal of the body upon us for forgiveness, and of a bestowal of Christ, in general, with the blessings secured by Him—and that in such a way as to lead us to conceive of the bestowal as accomplished immediately in the Word and not in

the body of Christ. Luther now treats distinctly of the significance of the body, or flesh, itself.[1]

The fundamental principle is found in the spiritual and divine character of the flesh, as being the flesh of Christ, the Son of God, the Logos. To this is to be applied, not with Zwingli, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii. 6), but, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." That is to say, what comes from the Spirit is spiritual, however corporeal and visible it may be. But the body of Christ was, according to Luke i. 34, 35, born of the Spirit. This flesh is, therefore, a spiritual food, and, further, as spiritual, also living, eternal, imperishable, imparting life to those who partake of it and preserving them from death. Here, then, occurs the statement, that the flesh of Christ is the same spiritual flesh, the same imperishable food, whether it be eaten bodily with the mouth or spiritually with the heart. Luther further designates it concisely "flesh of God, flesh of Spirit" (*Gottesfleisch*, *Geistesfleisch*). It is, says he, in God and God in it. It is full of divinity, of eternal good, of life, etc. The Holy Ghost Himself dwells in it. Yea, if only the body of Christ were in the bread, and no external Word of God connected with it, which is, of course, an impossible supposition, yet would the body not be present without the inward eternal Word, which is God Himself, and which, according to John i. 14, became flesh and is in the flesh.

We have here, therefore, living, life-giving, spiritual food, for both spiritual and bodily participation. And thus, according to Luther, the bodily participation, as such, has also its benefit. That is to say, even upon our bodies, which in the bodily participation receive the spiritual food, it must exercise its life-giving power. *Even the mouth, the neck, the loins* (*Leib*), *which eat the body of Christ shall have their benefit therefrom*, that they shall live forever and arise at the last day to everlasting happiness. This is the secret power and benefit which in the Lord's Supper passes from the body of Christ into our body. It cannot be present in vain. It must give life and salvation to our body, in accordance with its own character. Perishable food is transformed into the body that eats it. This spiritual food cannot be

[1] The principal sources for the following are Erl. Ed., xxx, 93 sq., 96–101, 116, 125, 130 sq., 132 sq., 135 sqq., 85–87.

consumed, digested or transformed. On the contrary, it changes him who eats it into itself, and digests his flesh, so that he, too, becomes spiritual, eternally alive and blessed. It is, to use a gross illustration, as though a wolf should devour a sheep, and the sheep should prove to be such strong food as to transform the wolf and make of it a sheep. A similar process may be noted in the original conquest of death by the surrender of the flesh of Christ to the experience of dying. Death, indeed, tried its power once upon this imperishable flesh, and sought to consume and digest it; but it could not accomplish its end. The flesh rent the loins of death. The food was too strong for death, and consumed and digested its devourer. In support of this efficacy of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper, Luther frequently cites the query of Irenæus: "If the body were not also to be saved, for what purpose should it then be fed with the body and blood of the Lord in the sacrament?"—and also the saying of St. Hilary: "Therefore does He desire to be in us naturally, both in the soul and in the body, according to John vi. 56."

Such power, therefore, lies in the body of Christ in and of itself. The flesh must, therefore, of itself be beneficial, because it is the flesh of the eternal Word, even though it were possible for the body to be alone in the Supper, without the Word. But this is not the case. In connection with the body stand also the words of Christ, which the heart grasps by faith. In that very act, to the bodily participation of the flesh of Christ is added the spiritual. And here Luther now sets both plainly side by side, with the benefits derived from each, declaring: If we eat the body spiritually through the Word, it remains spiritually in the soul; if we eat it bodily, it remains bodily in us, and we in it; it continually transforms us—the soul into righteousness, the body into immortality.

More distinctly still do we find the relation between the spiritual and the bodily participation unfolded in the utterances of Luther.

On the one hand, even the soul, in its spiritual participation, is assisted by the bodily partaking of the flesh, in so far as the latter is accompanied by faith. Not only does the heart seize upon the words, in order to eat spiritually what the mouth eats bodily, but faith clings also to the body itself which is in the bread and which the mouth eats. Bread and body are here not a useless external thing for us, because that which is external de-

pends upon the Word and fixes our faith, just as God commonly—as even in Old Testament times—gives us His Word in such a way, that He includes and presents to us therein some bodily thing. Viewing the subject from this side, namely, with regard to the significance which the presence and the oral participation of the body are supposed to have for the soul and faith, we are here again brought to the earlier conception of the body as a sign and pledge. And we are now prepared to comprehend the full meaning of Luther, when he says: "*The mouth eats bodily for the heart.*" Not only does the mouth perform what the heart, from its very nature, cannot perform, but that which the mouth does inures also to the benefit of the heart itself, since the latter contemplates with the eye of faith and for the strengthening of faith, in accordance with the words of Christ. the act of the mouth prescribed by Christ.

But Luther lays much greater stress upon the reverse proposition: "The heart eats for the mouth spiritually." It is in his view a matter of far more weighty, and even finally decisive, significance, that the *eating of the heart* should be combined with the eating of the mouth. Not only does our irrational body in itself fail to realize what sort of food it is eating, whereas the soul sees and understands that upon this food the body shall subsist forever; but the actual impartation of this benefit to the body by the food in question is secured, according to Luther, only through the spiritual participation, or through the belief exercised by the soul, and the Word upon which such belief rests. Even before entering upon the particular discussion of the benefit of bodily participation, he had declared:[1] "Is there a spiritual eating here, then must also the bodily eating be beneficial—*on account of the spiritual eating.*" And further: "Since the mouth is an organ of the heart, it must also finally live to eternity on account of the heart, which lives forever through the Word; for the mouth here also eats bodily the same eternal food which the heart eats spiritually with it." To this, too, he returns after all that he has claimed as the fruit of the bodily eating itself. In immediate connection with his appeal to Irenæus and Hilary in support of the transformation of our bodies into immortality by the bodily eating, he declares: "*The bodily benefit is accordingly great, and*

[1] Supra, p. 121.

is a consequence of (*folget aus*) *the spiritual.* His conception evidently is, that the treasure of life, which enters our body through the mouth, is nevertheless here made available only upon the condition that we with the heart believe the Word in which this treasure is included, just as the entire sacrament, with all that it is in itself or brings with it, remains without benefit, and even becomes a poison, for the unbelieving. We may cite, in illustration, the analogy suggested by Luther, that the conception of Christ in the womb of Mary was conditioned by the faith of the Virgin. If, according to his theory, Mary could not without faith have become the mother of Jesus, but God might nevertheless have yet formed the body of Jesus within her, so, likewise, may God permit the body of Christ to enter the body of unbelieving communicants despite their unbelief, but yet not permit the life-power residing in the body to be developed in them.

There yet remains for us the question: Was this special gift to our mouth and body then actually necessary, in order to make the body a fellow-heir of life and salvation? Would not the body have enjoyed this distinction, even without such gift, "on account of the heart," since "the mouth is the organ of the heart"? Must it not naturally inure to the benefit also of the body, if, as we have heard, "life, grace, salvation," etc., are found already in the Word itself, and if the Word in itself "overcomes death and all evil"? The question is fully justified by further didactic statements made by Luther, not only in his earlier writings, but also continuously, during the present and later periods, outside of his controversial publications against the Sacramentarians—as, for example, when he places life and salvation in immediate connection with the forgiveness of sins which faith derives from the Word, or when he very positively declares, that faith upon the Word can give salvation even without oral participation in the sacrament. Of this we shall have more to say in our concluding review. We here call attention to yet one passage in the document before us, in which Luther himself represents his opponents as saying: "Yes, but that might come to pass, too, without the sacrament."[1] To this, he first rejoins: Yes, and it might come to pass, too, entirely without the body of Christ exalted to the right hand of God, or even without the Gospel. He then argues

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 141.

further: It might just as well be asked, why there was any need at all for the Lord's Supper, since we can have the Gospel and the remembrance of Christ in all sermons—or, why the Scriptures should be read by individual believers, or special exhortations addressed to individuals, since all such exercises might be conducted in connection with the general public preaching of the Word. But God wants to fill the world, and to give Himself in many ways by His Word and works, in order to help and strengthen us. We dare not be so sated as to be willing to endure only the one way which may just happen to please us. We remark here, that in the sentences last quoted, the bodily nourishment in the sacrament is made parallel with such methods of divine grace as certainly have essentially but one and the same content—in which one and the same saving gift is brought to us, though in various ways.

We must, finally, note in the present publication, without deeming it necessary to enter upon particulars, the careful expositions of the patristic utterances relating to the sacramental presence of the body as such. We recognize in this the solicitude of Luther to make manifest on the part of all the ancient Fathers an agreement with the real presence as maintained by himself. We shall hereafter have further occasion to observe what great importance he here attached to the general consensus of the Church. He had already at the beginning of the year 1525 engaged learned friends in the work of collecting the utterances of the Fathers in regard to the sacrament.[1]

The severity of Luther's judgment in regard to the opponents against whom his publications were now directed, and in regard to the character of their faith as a whole, appears to have been increased rather than diminished during the progress of the controversy. Especially in this pamphlet, he designates them as men who share the views of Carlstadt and Münzer. And this brings to view the significance which he concedes, or rather that which he refuses to concede, to their celebration of the sacrament. He considers it, as we have seen, as God's judgment upon the proud who take offence at the presence of the body, *that they shall never partake of the Supper of Christ.* In fact, he no longer allows to their sacramental celebration that which he yet so decidedly maintains in the case of unbelieving communicants,

[1] Briefe, ii, 621.

namely, the objective dispensation of the body despite the unbelief of the recipient. "Since the Fanatics," he says, "believe that there is present bare bread and wine, it is, therefore, assuredly so; as they believe, so is it to them, and they eat bare bread and wine, and partake of the Lord's body neither spiritually nor bodily." The contradiction of his own principles into which he here seems to be led may be explained without difficulty. When he, in other connections, speaks of unbelieving recipients, he has in view cases in which the Supper in general is celebrated by a congregation, or church, which bases its act upon the institution of the sacrament by Christ, even although some unbelieving persons may partake in it. In the celebration by the Sacramentarians, however, he can no longer, in view of the interpretation which they give to the words of institution, at all recognize this basis. They have, as the document next to be examined declares, neither the words nor the appointed ordinance of God, but have perverted and changed them to suit their own fancy.[1] We reserve, however, further comment upon this point for our closing book. It may at least be questioned, whether there does not, after all explanations, still remain a conflict, at least, with certain declarations of Luther himself in relation to baptism. We have designedly first introduced these propositions at this place, since they appear in his writings not so much in any profound relation to his own doctrine of the sacrament itself as in connection with his zeal against the Sacramentarians.

c. THE LARGE CONFESSION OF A. D. 1528 UPON THE LORD'S SUPPER (*Grosses Bekenntniss vom Abendmahl Christi*).

"IS" NOT EQUIVALENT TO "SIGNIFIES"—BREAD NOT AN APPROPRIATE FIGURE—BREAKING OF BREAD REFERS TO DISTRIBUTION—ALLŒOSIS—MODES OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE—HIS BODY NOT AN "*alterum infinitum*"—IDENTICAL PREDICATION—SYNECDOCHE—SACRAMENT A SIGN OF CHRISTIAN UNITY—GIFT OF SACRAMENT IS FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

After Zwingli and Œcolampadius had replied to the publication just reviewed, Luther's own doctrine, in so far as opposed to their theories, found in several leading aspects a fuller development,

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 369. Comp. upon Hedge-masses, Ibid., p. 153.

and, indeed, the most thorough exposition of the points in question which he ever attempted, in his *Large Confession upon the Supper of Christ, 1528.*[1]

We refer particularly to the opposition to the *figurative interpretation of the words of institution*, which Luther here refutes more thoroughly, keenly and absolutely than elsewhere,—and, preeminently, to the further positive justification of the bodily presence upon the ground of the *unity of the human and divine in Christ.*

Against the Zwinglian interpretation, Luther now roundly declares, that not only has the evidence in support of its view of the words of institution never been produced, but the word "is" never means "signifies" in any other passage of the Scriptures. He declares that, if all the Fanatics together can produce a single passage from any language upon earth in which "is" has this meaning, he will allow that they have won their case. In such passages as those cited by Zwingli, Luther—as already at earlier dates, especially in commenting upon 1 Cor. x. 4—does not accord to the "is" the sense of "signifies," but declares that the description assigned to the subject in the predicate has there become a "new word," or received a new meaning, and in this new meaning it is to be really, by means of the "is," predicated of the subject. The "is," therefore, retains its own proper force. We may say, for example, that "Christ is a flower," inasmuch as we see Him springing from Mary as such a beautiful child. Here, as grammar and rhetoric teach us, "flower" has become a new word—has received a new significance and use; and hence Christ does not, according to this proposition, *signify* a flower, but He *is* a flower, only other than a natural one. Thus, we may call a man a dog, meaning a greedy miser. Here "dog" stands as a new word, and the man is not said to signify a dog, but to be a dog. It is common, in the German language, to prefix to words thus transformed such terms as "right," or "other," or "new." Thus, for example, we may say: "You are a right (real) dog; Zwingli is another Korah, and Œcolampadius a new Abiram." Likewise, also, in scriptural passages, to

[1] Erl. Ed., 151–373. The "Confession" was in process of preparation in November 1527 (Briefe, iii, 225), under the press at the beginning of the following February (Briefe, iii, 279), and was distributed in March, 1528 (Briefe iii. 296).

which the opponents appealed, we may say: "John is a new Elias; Christ is a right (true) rock, a right (true) vine."

But might not such propositions as the above, if interpreted as is here done by Luther, furnish Œcolampadius with a basis for the argument, that in the proposition, "This is my body," although the "is" does not stand for "signifies," yet the word "body" has received a new and metaphorical meaning? To this, Luther objects, in the first place, that, according to Christian doctrine, and according to the principles of grammar as well, we dare never pass from the old meaning of a word to a new one, unless the text itself, or reason, compels us to do so, or unless it is rendered necessary by other passages of Scripture; and this has never been proved by Œcolampadius in regard to the words of institution. He then argues, further, that, in the tropical expressions of Scripture which are adduced as evidence by his opponents, the term in question (as, for example, "Vine") indicates, according to its first, old meaning, the thing which is to serve as a figure for the new; and, according to the new meaning, the new and real, true (*recht*) thing itself. Thus, for example, Christ is not a figure of the vine, but the vine (according to the first meaning) is a figure of Christ (with reference to that attribute of Christ, by virtue of which He is the Vine itself according to the second meaning of the word, or the true Vine). But this relation would be reversed, according to Œcolampadius, in the sentence, "This is my body." Upon his theory, "body" would stand for "sign, or figure, of the body," whereas, according to the analogy of the illustrations adduced, the word "body" would have to have been so transformed as to be equivalent to the "real, new body," whose figure was the natural body of Christ. Neither is Luther willing to acknowledge as parallel cases the assertion made in regard to a picture: "This is Paul," or that in regard to a wooden rose: "This is a rose." The latter is really a rose, only not a natural one, but merely a wooden one; and when we say of it, "This is a rose," we do not mean thereby to say that it is a figure of a rose, but we mean to say what it is in its real nature. According to this analogy, we would have to have in the Lord's Supper two bodies of Christ, which might both truthfully be called "my body," and one of these would have to be a body of Christ composed of bread.

Christ, declares Luther at length, is by this supposed tropical

sense of His language made a trifling fool and vain prattler; for He has then introduced the words, "This is my body," in an entirely unnecessary and useless way, since we could certainly without them have meditated upon His death as we receive the bread and wine. Further, the allegory itself, which He is here supposed to employ, has no benefit whatever for faith. Moreover, the comparison which He is here supposed to have made between bread and His body is itself essentially a foolish one; for there is nothing here in which the thing likened and the likeness coincide (no *tertium comparationis*). The bread, that is to say, has no characteristic in which the body resembles it. If Christ desired to present in a meal a figure of His body, He would much better have left the old Mosaic meal of the Passover Lamb remain for this purpose, which does really most excellently signify His body given for us. Nor is there any help for the Fanatics in the notion that, in the passage 1 Cor. x. 24 ("my body, broken for you"), the resemblance lies in the breaking, *i. e.*, that, as the bread is broken at the table, so Christ is tortured upon the cross for us. The "broken," he claims, must have the same sense as the breaking immediately before, when it is said that Jesus took bread and brake it. Christ certainly did not crucify Himself, as would have had to be the case if the "break" here were equivalent to "kill," and if the breaking of bread, which occurred by His own hand, were a figure of the killing of His body. It is still, therefore, to be maintained, as was proved in the pamphlet against the Heavenly Prophets, that the breaking here is to be understood of the distribution of the bread, and likewise of the body. Besides, St. John (xix. 36) expressly denies the breaking of the body of Christ. But even though the bread were, on account of the breaking of it, to be compared with the body, there would still be no corresponding relation between the wine and the blood; for the drinking is, even by the declaration of the opponents themselves, a figure, not of the shed blood of Christ, but of the spiritual drinking, or faith.

With unremitting industry, and with an acuteness which no opponent of the Lutheran doctrine was able to deny, Luther, in the sections of this book from which we have quoted, criticized the interpretation of the Swiss Reformers, tore to pieces their arguments, and in a masterly way revealed the points of weakness presented, especially in Zwingli's "significat," and in the array

of supposed analogous forms of speech. And the more plentiful were the points of weakness thus discovered, the more easily can we understand why the opposing exegesis did not succeed in disturbing in the least degree his conviction of the correctness of his own doctrinal view.

But the dogmatical development, which now again comes into prominent view, possesses for us naturally a far greater interest.

The principal point in dispute Luther now again declares to be, *Whether the presence of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper is in conflict with His sitting at the right hand of God.* Zwingli's reply to Luther's last publication could not but serve to carry this inquiry and the further question, in what way the presence of the body of Christ should be conceived, back to the general question of the relation of the two natures in Christ.

Luther here encountered the Zwinglian doctrine of *Allœosis*. If the Scriptures, when speaking of one nature of Christ, employ expressions which really apply only to the other, and, accordingly, without discrimination affirm now of one and now of the other nature the conditions and activities described, this is, in the opinion of Zwingli, a mere form of speech, which he designates *Allœosis*. Thus, as Luther describes the theory, the Scriptures are supposed simply to take the one nature for the other, whilst each of the natures, in reality, yet remains so distinct from the other as to retain only its own characteristic modes of activity. Against this *Allœosis* Luther cannot now too earnestly warn. He calls it the devil's mask. He declares that it is an entirely arbitrary invention of Zwingli, without any evidence from Scripture. Its grandmother is the old sorceress, Dame Reason. And he turns at once against it the force of the fundamental interest of Christian faith.[1] When the Scriptures speak of the sufferings of Christ, this is, according to Zwingli, to be understood only of His human nature. But, in this case, Christ accomplishes nothing more by His sufferings than any other mere saint. If only the human nature suffered for us, then is Christ a poor Saviour, and stands in need, indeed, of a Saviour for Himself. If the person of Christ is divided, as this accursed *Allœosis* teaches, the whole Christian faith and the salvation of the world are at once swept away. He himself finds the explanation of the fact, that the

[1] Cf. supra, p. 83.

Scriptures ascribe to the humanity of Christ that which affects the divinity, and the reverse, in the actual union (unification) into which the divinity has entered with the humanity in the person of Christ. Divinity and humanity are in Christ one person. The person, Christ, is true God. If Christ now suffer, we may rightly say that the Son of God suffers: that is to say, the one part, the divinity, does not, indeed, suffer; but the person, who is God, suffers in the other part, namely, the humanity. It is as though we should say, "The king's son is wounded," although it is only his leg that is wounded; or, "Absalom is beautiful," although it is only his body that is beautiful. Since body and soul are one person, whatever befalls either the body or the soul, or even the smallest member of the body, is rightly ascribed to the whole person. Just in this way we are to apply to the entire person of Christ, in which divinity and humanity make one person, whatever befalls either part of the person, because the two are but one person. We do not mingle the two natures into one nature. We do not say that divinity is humanity, or that the divine nature is human nature. But we mingle the *two different natures* into one *single person*, and say: God is man; man is God. By means of the *Allœosis*, on the contrary, the person of Christ is divided, as though there were two persons. When, for example, the passages which speak of suffering are applied to the human nature alone, then, since not the nature, but the person, is the subject of the activity or suffering, Christ must be two persons.

Having thus condemned in general terms Zwingli's conception of the relation between the natures and the person of Christ, Luther passes again to his fundamental proposition, that no contradiction has been proved between Christ's *existence in heaven* and His *presence in the Lord's Supper;* but that, on the contrary, the former involves the ubiquity of the body. With this proposition he begins a new section of his dissertation, without attaching it, in the form of an inference, to the preceding section. Nor is the denial of the *Allœosis* really, in itself, the premise from which he deduces the omnipresence of the body; and he himself declares, on the other hand, that the latter doctrine could not in any event be overthrown by the *Allœosis* theory. For the idea underlying the proposition, that *the body of Christ is everywhere*, is not, says he, the same as that to which the *Allœosis* directly refers. The latter has to do only with the activities of the two

natures, whereas *his* proposition has to do with their essential character. His proposition, it is true, is an inference from the same unity of the person and the same union of the natures themselves in the person, from which he deduces also the necessity of rejecting the *Allœosis*. But to the height of his proposition, as he says, no *Allœosis* could reach. The latter can be applied only to utterances concerning the works of Christ, as when He is said to drink, to die, etc. But when it said that "God is man," or that "man is God," this cannot by any means be an *Allœosis;* "God" must, at all events, be taken to mean God, and "man" to mean man. Luther then concludes, as in his earlier rejoinders: Jesus Christ is essentially natural, true, complete God and man in One person, unseparated and undivided. Since His humanity has become one person with God, and so entirely and altogether taken up into God above all creatures that He, as it were, clings to Him, it is, therefore, not possible that the God could be anywhere where He would not be man. The two natures are so united with one another that they belong together more intimately than soul and body; and, accordingly, Christ must also be man wherever He is God. But the right hand of God, and Christ, by virtue of His sitting at the right hand of God and by virtue of His own essential divinity, are everywhere. In these declarations Luther again, referring to John iii. 13, includes also the period of Christ's earthly life. He charges upon Zwingli, who denied that the body of Christ is present wherever God is, and thus at the same time in heaven and on earth, that his coarse spirit knows nothing of what it means to "be in heaven," and he appeals to the fact that Christ was then already, according to John iii. 13, at the same time in heaven. And he expressly adds, that this applies also to the humanity of Christ from the time of His existence in His mother's womb. It was higher and deeper in God than any angel, and hence, also, higher in heaven. According to this, there is left between the states of Christ, as walking upon the earth and as exalted in heaven, only the difference, that His humanity in the former state, although then already the above-depicted consequences of its union with the divinity pertained to it, yet, at the same time, revealed itself in external visibility and humble form at one particular place on earth.

If we now look back from this point upon the section of the *Confession* directed against the *Allœosis*, we cannot fail to note,

further, that conclusions are here drawn directly from the personal unity itself, which go far beyond anything which might have been inferred merely from the positions then taken. From the latter, no more could be immediately concluded than that, in analogy with the declarations concerning the sufferings of Christ, *the person* which is human possesses in the other part, namely, the divinity, the attribute of omnipresence. Here, on the other hand, it is asserted, that by virtue of this union, the omnipresence, which belongs in the first instance to the one part, *i. e.*, the divinity, and which is further said, according to the previous section referred to, to belong to the person of Christ with reference to this one part, must have also passed over to the humanity itself. The controversial writings against the Sacramentarians carry us no farther in doctrinal distinctions upon these points. Luther's further utterances in relation to them will find their appropriate place in our connected presentation of his Christology.

Thus we have found the Christological basis of Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper again unfolded in his *Confession*. He desires, however, to clear the way more fully for the acceptance of the bodily presence, which is for him assured by the relation of the humanity of Christ to His divinity, by expounding anew, yet more thoroughly and with minuter distinctions than hitherto, the theory *that God, in order to be at any one place, is by no means bound to a local presence.*

He discriminates between three modes of being at one place, *i. e.*, *locally* or circumscriptively, *definitively* and *repletively*.

A thing is, according to Luther, *locally*, or *in a comprehensible manner*, in a place, when the place and the thing present in it correspond with and measure one another, when the one covers the other, and when the one is the measure of the other; as, for example, the wine and the vessel which it fills. In this way the body of Christ was present when He, walking upon the earth, filled or vacated space equal to the size of His body. Since then, He can still make use of this mode whenever He so desires. He did employ it in His appearances to His disciples after His resurrection, and He will employ it again in His visible manifestation at the Last Day. But He is not in such a mode with the Father, or in heaven. It is only to the abandoning of this mode of presence that Luther applies the expressions concerning the departure of Christ from this world, etc., with which his

opponents sought to disprove the presence of Christ in the sacrament.

A thing is present *definitively*, or *in an incomprehensible manner*, when it is at a certain definite place, which place is corporeal and comprehensible and has its dimensions in space, its length, breadth and thickness, but when the said thing is not of itself present in a comprehensible manner, cannot be measured by the dimensions of the place, and has itself neither length nor breadth. (The term, definitive, was taken by Luther from Occam.) Thus, angels or spirits are present at places in such a manner that they can be in a whole house or city, or, on the other hand, in a chest or nut-shell. Luther now again applies the illustration drawn from the recorded facts concerning the body of Christ after the resurrection, to which he had appealed in the document last reviewed. There was here no measuring nor comprehension as the body passed through the sealed stone or the closed door. It occupied no space, nor did the stone give up to it any space. The stone remained an entire, solid stone, and the closed door likewise remained unaltered; and yet His body was at the same time in the place where wood and stone also were, and still remained itself as large as before. And thus He passes, says Luther further, upon all occasions through all created things at His pleasure. This same manner of presence, he affirms, characterizes also the angels, and shall be shared even by all the saints in heaven. They shall likewise be able to pass in their bodily form through all created things, just as the angels and the devil do. He thinks to find a further parallel for this mode of presence in the fact, that our vision extends for miles, and is yet at the same time present at all included places, without taking up or surrendering space—or that a sound passes, in a similar way, through the air and through walls, and light through air, water or glass. In this mode of presence he finds the justification of his claim for the presence of the body in the Lord's Supper. If Christ could be in the closed door without taking up room, or place, equal to His own size, why not also in the bread? All created things, in general, are just as penetrable and as present to Him as its corporeal place is to any other body. And the basis for this claim he finds in the asserted unity of the two natures in the One person. By virtue of this unity, Christ can manifest Himself according to the first, or comprehensible manner, at any place,

as He may desire, and yet also employ, in addition, the other and incomprehensible mode of presence.

He then proceeds to deduce from this same unity the further consequence, that Christ is, and can be, in the third manner, or *repletively*, present everywhere. A thing is repletively, or supernaturally, at places when it is at the same time, in its entirety and completeness, at all places and fills all places, and is yet bounded and comprehended by no place; as God is, in Jer. xxiii. 23, said to be a God near at hand, and not afar off, since He fills heaven and earth. Just in this manner must Christ also, since He must be as man wherever He is as God, be present everywhere with His humanity, according to this supernatural, divine mode of presence. According to this third mode, all created things are for Him yet far more penetrable and more truly present than according to the second. If He can, according to the second mode, be in created things without being measured or comprehended by them, much more is He then wonderfully in them according to the third mode, so that not only do they not measure or comprehend Him, but He, on the contrary, has them present before Him, measures and comprehends them. We must locate this, His nature, since He is one with God, far—very far—without and beyond all created things, as far as God is without and beyond them, and yet, again, as deeply in and near all created things as God is within them.

Luther here again speaks with great contempt of the contracted conception of the divine presence in general held by his opponents. The divinity is, according to their notion, present everywhere in the corporeal, comprehensible manner (*localiter*), just as though God were a sort of great extended something, reaching through all creatures and out beyond them, filling the world and sticking out beyond it like the straw in an over-full straw-sack. In confutation of this, he repeats the declaration that God is not such a stretched-out being, with special dimensions, but a supernatural, inscrutable Being, present entire and complete in every grain of corn, and yet in and above and beyond all created things. When we speak of the presence of God, the word "in" does not mean a comprehensible inclusion, as in a bag or basket, but it signifies all that we understand by "above, beyond, beneath, through and through again, and everywhere."

Zwingli had objected that, if the body of Christ were present

wherever God is, this body would then be an *alterum infinitum*—another infinite thing like God Himself. But Luther is by no means ready to accept or concede this. We have, indeed, already heard him speak of the body of Jesus as having a definite size (*vid. supra:* "It remained as large as before"), but yet a size, or magnitude, in a far other than a proper, special, perceptible sense, according to which it would be included and measured by a particular place. He now replies, that the world itself is not *infinitum*, or boundless; hence, even if it were granted that the body is everywhere present [in the world], it would not logically follow that infinity could be ascribed to it. Moreover, he detected again, in this objection, the miserable notion of the gross and comprehensible mode of the divine presence. Opposing to it again the idea, that God can, at any rate, hold an object in certain places in more than one way, he now claims, with reference for support to Matt. xviii. 10, that angels can be at the same time in heaven and on earth—in heaven before the face of God, and on earth to minister to us—but that we do not on that account ascribe infinity to them. He here again casts upon his opponents the reproach, that their coarse spirit understands nothing of what it is *to be in heaven*, quoting again John iii. 13. And he now, at length, goes so far as to exclaim: But how if we should say that not only was Christ, while walking on the earth, at the same time also in heaven, but that even we, mortal men living upon earth, are also in heaven, in so far as we believe in Christ? How silly would not such language seem to the Fanatics! But this St. Paul testifies in Eph. i. 3; ii. 5, 6; Col. iii. 3. We here naturally recall the assertion met with in the *Sermon von dem Sacrament*, etc.—that the believing heart is truly in heaven, being where Christ is;[1] and also the declaration occurring in the tract, *Dass diese Worte Christi*, etc., to the effect that, if the Fanatics bind God to His throne in heaven, then must we also sit there with Him, since Paul says in Acts xvii. 28: "We are of His nature, and in Him we live, move and have our being."[2] Luther now explains what it really means to be in heaven: "Whatever is in God, and in the presence of God, is in heaven." He holds up this idea before the Fanatics, who call nothing heaven any more, except that to which they can point upward

[1] Supra, p. 111.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxx. 57.

with their fingers and eyes, in the sky where the sun and moon are seen. But, inasmuch as God is in heaven, and yet His presence not to be conceived of as local, we should, in the use of such expressions, allow our thoughts to go far beyond the sensuous, spacial idea of heaven. But does it not logically follow that, if Christians are also in heaven and in God, they must, like Christ Himself, be omnipresent? Zwingli had asserted such an omnipresence of believers as a consequence of the omnipresence of Christ, and as a corollary of the saying of Christ, "Where I am, there shall ye also be." Luther replies, that, although we shall be where Christ is, according to the first and second modes of presence, we shall not enjoy that privilege according to the third mode, by virtue of which Christ is where God is: for the Scriptures place only Christ, who is One person with God, at *the right hand of God* (yet it does follow from the omnipresence of Christ that we are where He is; just because He is everywhere, He must also certainly be with us). In this, then, we find the answer to our question. Because we are in God, it does not follow, according to Luther, that we are so in the same full sense in which this may be said of the God-man, Christ, in whose case such omnipresence, or presence in the third, or repletive, supernatural mode, follows as a necessary consequence. Because we are in heaven, it is not to be inferred that we are also at the right hand of God. Hence, it must be acknowledged that Luther's reference to the presence of the angels, as at the same time in heaven and on earth, does not present a sufficient reply to Zwingli's conclusion, that, if the body of Christ be omnipresent, it must also be infinite; for what has just been said as to the difference between our being in heaven and Christ's being there applies as well to the angels, and it does not follow that they are *repletively* omnipresent. The question may still be asked, whether this mode of presence peculiar to Christ does not, after all, imply the infinity of His body.

If we now turn our attention again from this general discussion of the omnipresence of Christ and of His body to the *special presence in the Lord's Supper*, it will be at once evident how completely the possibility of the latter has been guarded against all objections by the thoroughness displayed in the treatment of the former. It was with this object in view that Luther had again, as in the publication immediately preceding that now

under review, so fully and impressively presented the former doctrine. It is, however, mainly, as already observed, the second, or *definitive* mode of the presence of Christ, upon which he bases the theory of the sacramental presence. The connection of thought is, in Luther's mind, as follows: If Christ is, like God, everywhere present, He can, in addition to this, be also present in the mode of which analogies are seen in the presence of finite spirits—angels, devils and glorified believers. This second mode of presence naturally presented itself as the one adapted to the requirements of the presence in the sacrament, since it likewise treats of a presence, although "incomprehensible" (*unbegreiflich*), yet in a special place. The body of Christ, according to Luther, while omnipresent in the highest, divine mode, is at the same time, in the sacrament, where He desires also to be "comprehended" (grasped), specially present in the second mode, which is shared with Him also by inferior spirits.

In all these suggestions of Luther as to the mode of the Saviour's presence, it must be expressly borne in mind, that he has no thought whatever of having thus circumscribed or exhausted the possible modes of the divine presence, and that he does not seek to establish upon such grounds the actual fact of the sacramental presence; but that he only claims to have thus indicated, for the sake of those to whom the latter appeared irreconcilable with the continued existence of Christ in heaven, a way in which the two conceptions may be very easily combined. The real basis of faith in the doctrine remains the Word of Christ: "This is my body." At the very beginning of his argument for the omnipresence of the body, he refers to his declaration in the tract last reviewed, that he has merely sought to indicate a way in which God can make it possible for Christ to be in heaven, and yet His body at the same time in the sacrament on earth; and that he has left to the divine wisdom and power other ways in which to accomplish the same object. And even afterwards, having spoken at length of the "definitive" presence, he repeats the caution, declaring that, with the evidence that Christ can be at any place in more than the merely local way, enough has been proved to justify faith in the words of institution. Who will be so rash as to attempt to measure and circumscribe the power of God, as though He did not, forsooth, know also other ways? Yea, he further declares, he would not even deny that a body might be

enabled by the divine omnipotence to be in many places according to the first, comprehensible, or local mode; for whose vision has caught the limit of the divine power?

He even proposes, at last, to grant, for the sake of argument, the claim of the word-juggling Fanatics, *that the body of Christ is in one place in heaven.* He asserts that, even in that case, all created things would be before the enthroned Christ, and about Him, like a clear, transparent air. In support of this position, he again appeals to the facts, that spirits hear, or pass clearly and easily, through walls, and that stones, which are to our vision thick and dark, are to them like glass or thin air, as is proved by evil spirits and angels, and by the presence of Christ in the sealed stone and the closed door. He then introduces other comparisons, in support of which he appeals in part to Laurentius Valla and to a line of argument already common among teachers of the papal Church. We may see in the centre of a crystal or precious stone a speck, or bubble, which appears at the same time in all parts of the crystal, and which, when the latter is turned about, appears always immediately before us. Thus, even though Christ were sitting at one place in heaven, in the midst of all created things, yet could God, in a way far more true and wonderful than that in which the speck in the crystal appears before us, present to us the body of Christ in the bread. The single voice, proceeding from the One mouth of the preacher, enters in a moment many thousand ears. Much more would God be able to make the body of Christ, although it were in but one place, yet present at once in many places in the bread and wine, since He is much swifter than the voice, and all created things are much more penetrable for Him than for the voice, as He proved in passing through the stone of the sepulchre. A mirror may be broken into a thousand pieces, and yet the same complete image which was seen in the entire mirror remain in each piece. God, who makes this possible, could surely also so form the One body of Christ that, although it were in one place in heaven, yet not only its image, but the body itself, could be in many places at one time. To Him it is much easier to pass into bread or wine than for a countenance to pass into a mirror, since He can pass through stone and iron, through which no picture, or countenance, could pass. These illustrations, it will be remembered, were introduced only to meet the supposed case,

that the "notion of the Fanatics" touching the existence of Christ in heaven, rejected by Luther himself, were a correct view. In meeting this supposition, as will be observed, he combines with the corporeal and comprehensible presence of Christ at one place in heaven, as conceived by his opponents, also a presence in the second, incomprehensible mode, whereby Christ is represented as present in the bread and wine of the sacrament. Meanwhile, it is worthy of remark, that he has not so definitely conceived the idea which illustrations such as the above are designed to present as to make them applicable only to the one view. On the contrary, he does not hesitate to employ illustrations entirely similar in elucidating various conceptions of the presence of Christ. Thus, when illustrating his own view as to the presence of Christ in heaven, he applied as a parallel the human vision extending through a great stretch of space,[1] which is essentially the same as that of the voice of the preacher employed above when, for the first time, we have to do with a subject regarded as occupying one definite place. Again, the illustration of the speck, or bubble, in the crystal finds a parallel in one which Luther afterwards employs in explaining his own view of the mode of Christ's presence, *i. e.*, the image of the sun reflected from a pond, which is but one image, but which every one standing upon the bank sees immediately before him. He designates this, indeed, a coarse illustration, but infers that God can much more devise a mode of presence by which the body of Christ can be everywhere and wherever it may desire to be. The lack of clear discrimination which Luther in this instance displays is intimately connected with an indefiniteness in the apprehension of the real physical conditions in the objects employed in illustration. In connection with the illustration drawn from a mirror, he himself remarks, that he knows very well that the images in the glass are not the face itself. It might have been just as naturally suggested, in criticism of his comparison with the bubble in the crystal, that this is not really present at different points, but is so only in the subjective apprehension of the person looking at it—that not the bubble itself, but only its image, is so present. Yet he there insists that, if God can make so many images in a moment, we may much more readily believe that He can bring about the presence of the body of Christ at many places.

[1] Vid. supra, p. 138.

Luther does not present in the *Bekenntniss* any further exposition of the idea, that this body, although everywhere present, cannot be everywhere found and apprehended by us. In response to the charge that, upon this theory, Christ would have bound Himself to particular places by His sacramental presence, he merely points to the reply already given in the tract against the Heavenly Prophets.

On the other hand, he treats, in conclusion, with especial fullness the question, how, in the words, "This is my body," which require us to believe in the real presence of the body, we are to conceive the *relation of the predicate to the subject.* This question has before been called to our attention, particularly in the treatise upon the *Babylonian Captivity* and that against the Heavenly Prophets. We recall how he dealt, in the former, with the axiom quoted in defence of transubstantiation, *i. e.*, that one and the same thing must be presented in subject and predicate,[1] and in the latter, appealed to the rhetorical figure, *Synecdoche*.[2] He now treats of the question under the caption: *Concerning Identical Predication* (*de praedicatione identica*). He describes the question as one which properly challenges the attention of all men of candid mind, which Wickliffe discussed most prominently, and with which all the universities have struggled. The universities at length decided and taught, since identical predication concerning things of diverse natures would be contrary to the Scriptures and to reason, that there remains no bread in the sacrament (no more recognizing actual bread as the *subject*). Wickliffe retained the bread, but gave up the body (placing, therefore, something else in the *predicate*). He now acknowledges the rule of grammar and logic with which both parties set out. But he proposes, with Wickliffe, to maintain the continued presence of the bread (although attaching no great importance to it), and, at the same time, with the Sophists, the presence of the body. That, as in the Lord's Supper, two diverse objects (natures: *Wesen*) should be one thing—that the bread, while remaining bread, should be also body—appears to him to contradict the principles neither of logic nor of reason. He appeals, first of all, to the Scriptures. In the Trinity there are three different Persons, and yet each of these is the One God. The

[1] Vol. I., p. 391.

[2] Supra, p. 80 sq.

unity of nature and essence here makes it possible that "different persons (should) be yet pronounced identical, and one essence." This is a *natural unity*. Of Christ, we say, "This man is the Son of God," although His humanity still remains, and although man and God are much farther removed from one another than bread and body. It is, in this case, the *personal unity* which makes it possible for us to speak of two different natures as one nature. Another form of unity lies at the basis of such scriptural declarations as that He makes His angels winds and His ministers flames of fire (Ps. civ. 4), and of the statement which we might accordingly make of such a wind: "This is an angel." We may call this a *practical* (*wirkliche*) unity, since the angel and its form, the wind, accomplish the same work. In the fourth place, the holy Evangelists tell us that the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ in the form of a dove; and hence we may say, pointing to the dove: "This is the Holy Spirit." We may call this a *formal* unity, since the Holy Spirit desired to reveal Himself in such a form. Now why, asks Luther, should we not much more, pointing to the bread in the Lord's Supper, be able to say: "This is my body," although bread and body are two different essences? Here also a unity has been formed out of two kinds of essence. The peculiar unity which here occurs he would call *sacramental*, since the body of Christ and the bread are given to us as a sacrament. It is not, says he, a natural or personal unity, such as that between God and Christ; is different perhaps, also, from that between the dove and the Holy Spirit, or the flame and the angel. Yet it is a sacramental unity. We can just as well say, pointing to the bread: "This is the body of Christ," as could John, when he saw the dove, have said that he saw the Holy Ghost. Yea, he proceeds, it is, furthermore, even proper to say that he who lays hold upon the bread and crushes it with his teeth lays hold upon and crushes with his teeth the body of Christ, although, indeed, no one sees, lays hold of, or chews this body, as we see and chew other flesh visibly; for that which is done to the bread may be well and properly applied to the body of Christ on account of the sacramental union. He justifies the confession to which Berangar was driven by Pope Nicholas, that he in the sacrament crushed and tore with his teeth the true body of Christ, since the meaning of the proposition is, that whosoever eats or bites this bread, bites that which is the true body of

Christ, and not mere bare bread. This bread is certainly the body of Christ, as the dove is the Holy Spirit, and the flame an angel.

In the above, Luther claims to have shown that the interpretation of the words of institution as designating actual bread and wine is by no means contrary to the teachings of Scripture. But he is bold to meet also the objections proffered in the name of logic. He demands that those who on this ground take offence at the understanding of the words which he advocates shall first give some attention to the principles of grammar or rhetoric. Logic, he grants, teaches rightly that bread and body, dove and Spirit, God and man, are of different natures. But it is authorized by the rules of grammar in all languages, when two different natures are so combined as to become one nature, to include them both in the same form of expression. Thus, we may say of Christ: "He is God," or, "He is man," or again, "The man is God," etc. So, too, we may say: "This is bread," or, "This is my body," or, "This bread is my body," etc. And, says Luther, it is really true that such different natures are truly combined in one, and that they, by being thus joined together, gain a new harmonious nature, in accordance with which they are rightly called one kind of nature, although each has for itself its own peculiar nature. When, moreover, Luther now, in discoursing upon the *praedicatio identica*, refers to the rules of rhetoric, he has in view the same figure of speech of which he has before availed himself, *i. e.*, *Synecdoche*. He asserts that this mode of speech, in which things of different nature are spoken of as one, is called *Synecdoche* by the grammarians, and is very common, not only in the Scriptures, but in all languages as well. He supposes, for example, that some one should point to a purse, and say: "This is five hundred guldens"; or that it should be said of one who had merely pierced the hand of the king's son, that he had pierced the king's son[1]—and cites again, finally, the illustration of the glowing iron, of which we say: "This is fire," and, "This is iron."[2] In this way he now justifies himself in maintaining that the "identical predication concerning diverse natures," or the maxim, "that two different natures may be

[1] Cf. supra, p. 135, in the argument against the Allœosis.

[2] Cf. our remark, supra, p. 80.

pronounced one nature," is allowable, despite Wickliffe and the Sophists. He can thus also further say, as he does in the conclusion of the document: "The *praedicatio identica* does not trouble us at all in the Lord's Supper: there is really none here, but Wickliffe and the Sophists only dream so." He finds no such predication in regard to diverse natures here, because the natures, which are in themselves diverse, are no longer so in view of the new nature which they have in their union become. "When they come together and become an entire new nature, they then lose their difference, in so far as the new harmonious (*einig*) nature is concerned. It is now no longer mere bread, but flesh-bread, or body-bread; that is, bread which has become one sacramental nature, and one thing, with the body of Christ. Likewise, it is no longer mere wine, but blood-wine; that is, wine which has come to be one sacramental nature with the blood of Christ."

The above are the principal points which may be gleaned from the *Bekenntniss*, illustrating the further development and formulation of the doctrinal views of the Reformer.

He had, before assailing Zwingli's *Allœosis*, designated, as the two principal points against which he had contended in his previous controversy with that "wild spirit," the propositions, that the sitting of Christ at the right hand of God is irreconcilable with His bodily presence in the Supper, and that flesh profiteth nothing. We have seen how he carried on the controversy upon the first point. Upon the second he does not now enter at any greater length, least of all upon the question of the actual benefit of bodily participation. He merely further fortifies, first against Zwingli, and then against Œcolampadius, his exegesis of the above utterance of John, which denied that Christ had there any reference to His own flesh. He then again briefly asserts, that the flesh of Christ alone, partaken of without faith and the Word, is, indeed, poison and death; but when it is partaken of together with the Word and faith, the eating of the flesh is necessary and beneficial. The lying spirit, he declares, has not refuted his own little book in which this is proved, but has only sought by lies to bring it into discredit.

We must notice, further, his reply to the objection of Œcolampadius, who argued from the very idea and nature of a sacrament that there must here be given a *sign* of the body. He is pre-

pared to grant very cordially that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament, although it is not so designated in the Scriptures. He accepts also the conception of a sacrament according to which something is to be figuratively indicated in it. He disputes, however, the inference that we must, therefore, take the words of institution themselves figuratively. Even Moses, he argues, when instituting the Passover, which is a figure of Christ, did not employ any words which were themselves figurative, but only plain, clear, simple words; and so, likewise, all the figures of the Old Testament are presented in plain, simple, clear words. He pronounces Œcolampadius deficient in the "primary dialectics" (*puerilis dialectica*) which teaches to "divide rightly." He himself discriminates as follows: The sacrament, or event (the sacramental procedure, or act), is to be a sign, or likeness—the passover-lamb a picture of Christ; circumcision, a picture of the death of the old Adam; baptism, a picture of the drowning of sin: but the words employed are to signify nothing else than just what they express—those speaking of the passover-lamb meaning the passover-lamb, those speaking of circumcision meaning bodily circumcision, those speaking of baptism meaning dipping into water. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper must also, it is true, *typify* and *indicate* something; and that is, the unity of believers in the one spiritual body of Christ, through one and the same spirit, faith, love, cross, etc.: but the *words of the sacrament* must mean simply what they express.

Thus, in this reply of Luther to Œcolampadius, we find him again, in reliance upon the traditional conception of the sacrament, placing in the foreground that feature of the Holy Supper in which he had already in his *Sermon of A. D. 1519*, influenced by the same general conception, located the "significance" of the sacrament.

The *forgiveness of sins*, likewise, although here only incidentally entering into the discussion, receives, as the gracious gift conferred by the sacrament, the same acknowledgment as heretofore.[1]

[1] In the *Unterricht der Visitatoren*, etc., written by Melanchthon, and revised by Luther, A. D. 1528 (Erl. Ed., xxiii, 36), it is simply said, in entire harmony with the doctrinal views of Luther as we have thus far constantly found them expressed: In the words of the Lord's Supper forgiveness of sins is promised; and we obtain this, not through the outward partaking of the (*true*, *present*) body of Christ, but through faith, which is awakened through the words and signs.

Thus, while, in his exegetical analysis of the scriptural passages treating of the Supper, holding fast to his interpretation of the declaration: "The cup is the new testament in my blood" (that is: the cup is the new testament because the blood of Christ is in it), he declares: The new testament is the promise—yea, the bestowal—of grace and the forgiveness of sins. It is improper to say (as does Œcolampadius) that the bare cup is so called, and that on account of the wine, which is a sign of the blood of Christ. On the contrary, the cup is so called because it becomes One sacramental thing with the blood of Christ within it, or with the new testament. He further declares that, since the new testament is in the Lord's Supper, forgiveness of sins, spirit, grace, life and all salvation must be in it; all of which is comprehended in the Word, without which we would not know what was in the Lord's Supper. He then presents the beautiful and wonderful connection existing between all the parts of the sacrament as follows: The words, which are the first thing, and without which cup and bread would be nothing, include the bread and the cup (set apart) for the sacrament; the bread and the cup include the body and the blood of Christ; the body and blood of Christ include the new testament; the new testament includes the for giveness of sins; the forgiveness of sins includes eternal life and salvation. Here, again, he employs the mode of speech of which he had spoken in the section treating of the "identical predication," declaring that, inasmuch as this is all One sacramental procedure, we may rightly say of any part of it, as of the cup, "This is the blood of Christ; this is the new testament; this is forgiveness of sins, etc."—just as we may point to the man, Christ, and say: "This is God; this is the truth, the life," etc.

It would carry us too far away from the purpose of the present historical section to enter into the consideration of the separate terms in this exegetical analysis. We have presented the above extracts merely to show how distinctly Luther at this time still assigns the central place to the *forgiveness of sins*, as the gracious blessing conferred by the sacrament. He here again locates this forgiveness in the body and blood, without explaining the relation in which the Word and the body stand to one another in the distribution. He then in the same section, indeed, applies the idea of the *sign* (*Zeichen*) also to the presence of the body and blood—but only with the general idea of a miracle (*Wunderzeichen*) wrought

by God, without representing it distinctly as a sign for the forgiveness of sins. He is led to the employment of the term in meeting the objection, that the signs (miracles) of Christ were on other occasions always visible, which is not the case in the supposed miraculous presence of the body in the sacrament. But even thus, his reply is not without interest for us: The poor little Fanatics, indeed, bravely boast that Christ never performed a miracle (sign), except such as stood out visibly before men. Just as though it was, for example, no miracle that John the Baptist should have seen the Holy Ghost descend from heaven, although the latter did not stand out visibly, but only in the form of the dove. Thus it is, indeed, a miracle, that the body and blood of Christ are in the sacrament, although not visible. It is enough that we recognize their presence through the Word and faith.

Luther has not given in this *Bekenntniss*, as he had not designed to give, a systematic general view of his doctrine upon the Lord's Supper, in which all the points involved should be accurately and separately established, and their connection with one another and with the general character of a sacrament carefully traced. His immediate concern was limited to those chief points which appeared to him to require a further exposition and defence in view of the assaults of Zwingli and Œcolampadius.

d. LUTHER AT MARBURG—THE SCHWABACH ARTICLES.

ERROR IN ONE DOCTRINE CORRUPTS ALL—PERSON OF CHRIST—BODILY PRESENCE.

Steadfastly maintaining thus his own views, Luther persisted none the less tenaciously in his opinion as to the entire doctrinal position and character of those who opposed them. Nor was he the man to be influenced by any political considerations, such as the necessity of a confederation against the power of the papal majority, to modify his judgment, or to moderate in the least his severity in the public expression of it. In regard to such a proposed union with adherents of the Swiss sacramental theory, he declares, that if they do not amend their doctrine touching the sacrament, there is no hope whatever that they will remain orthodox and steadfast upon other points; that it is not allowable to

help defend them in their heresy. It is, he declares, an erroneous idea, that, since there is agreement with them upon the other doctrines, this one should not be so strenuously insisted upon; rather does the error in regard to this one doctrine make all the others unclean. Whoever denies one article is no less unchristian than was Arius.[1]

With unconcealed aversion, he finally allowed himself to be brought face to face with Zwingli and Œcolampadius at Marburg.

The argument to which he here clung without wavering was the plain (*dürre*), clear words of Christ: "*Hoc est corpus meum.*" He makes the unqualified demand, that we should be content to rest in what Christ Himself says. Against that the devil can accomplish nothing. We ought not to set ourselves up as above God's Word, but to give Him all the glory. In a report of the colloquy, which he prepared for the Landgrave, he declares, that the arguments of the opponents do not satisfy the demands of *conscience*. He grants that those upon the other side in the controversy may mean well, but he expresses the fear that they have not known what it is to be sorely tempted upon the points covered by this doctrine. He at a later time asserts, also in addressing Landgrave Philip, that he knows very well that the opposers cannot quiet even their own consciences with their trifling formulas and ideas. But they cannot now draw back, since they have undertaken to dispute the doctrine.[2]

The two chief arguments which Luther was called upon to meet at Marburg, and which he found too weak to withstand the force of the words uttered by Christ Himself, "*Hoc est,*" etc., were, again, that drawn from John vi., which was, in Zwingli's opinion, absolutely conclusive against him, and the necessity that the body of Christ, being a true body, should be in only one place, namely, at the right hand of God. No new argument of any importance was adduced upon either side. When Zwingli contended, in defence of the second proposition, that a body, as body, must occupy space and have spacial dimensions, Luther replied that—according to philosophy—"the natural heavens themselves, though so great a body, are without a place" (*sine*

[1] Briefe, iii, 466. Erl. Ed., xviii, 114 (A. D. 1530): "If one link in the chain is broken, the whole chain is broken;" similarly also in Comm. ad Galat., ii, 335.

[2] Briefe, iii, 510; iv, 25.

loco).[1] He rejected the argument, also, on the ground that it was derived, not from the Scriptures, but from reason. In response to Zwingli's assertion, based upon John vi., that Christ would have given us in the corporeal reception of His body something entirely unnecessary, Luther makes the assertion, that if the Lord should offer us wild crab-apples to eat, we should not dare to ask why He gave them. Œcolampadius likewise reiterated his appeal to the nature of a sacrament, which, as such, signifies something—is a sign; but here, too, the controversy covered beaten ground without developing any new points of doctrine.

Upon Luther's side, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was formulated, with no possibility of the surrender of any portion of the claim thus made, as follows: "We believe that the sacrament of the altar is a sacrament of the true body and blood of Christ, and the spiritual participation of this body and blood highly necessary for every Christian." The second clause of this proposition, which, indeed, only reaffirmed what Luther had elsewhere taught, was evidently added in such express terms with special reference to the objection of the Swiss theologians; while, in accepting the first clause, of the *true* body, they would be compelled to renounce their former teaching. Nothing was expressly stated in the formula as to the bodily reception by unworthy communicants. But that this was implied in the real presence of the true body was constantly assumed by Luther as a necessary inference throughout his entire controversy with his Swiss antagonists, and no reference was made by any one to the possibility of a theory of the real presence[2] which should not involve this as a corollary. The result of the colloquy was a failure to reach an agreement "whether the true body and blood of Christ are corporeally in the bread and wine."

Upon the other points upon which, in Luther's opinion, the teaching of the Sacramentarians had been wrong, and even "pestilential,"[3] *e. g.*, upon the theses concerning baptism, original sin and the eternal Word, a degree of unity of opinion was attained far beyond all the expectations or hope of Luther. He regarded this as a pusillanimous surrender upon the part of his

[1] According to Luther's own report, Briefe, iv, 28.

[2] Cf. Swabian Syngramma; also *infra*, p. 155 sqq.

[3] Briefe, iv, 25, 28.

antagonists,[1] who, he thought, were now anxious to avoid the imputation of having ever taught any other doctrine.

Their persistence, however, in holding to the "heresy" in regard to the Lord's Supper was to him a sufficient cause for the withholding of the hand of fellowship. He insisted: "You have another spirit than we." He was willing to pledge love and peace in his relations with them only in so far as we owe these even to our enemies, and "so far as every man's conscience may possibly allow." The bitter words hitherto spoken and written should at least be allowed to rest.

In the *Schwabach Articles*, of which those of Marburg formed the basis, the Lutheran doctrine received a still more definite expression. These embraced also the christological confession: "That the Son of God, true God and man, Jesus Christ, is a *single, inseparable person* (who) suffered for us men, died, ascended to heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, Lord over all creation; so that we are not to believe that Jesus Christ suffered for us as the man, or the human nature; but, since God and man are here not two persons, but One inseparable person, we are to teach that God and man, or the Son of God, truly suffered for us." In the article upon the Lord's Supper, it is said: "That here is truly present in the bread and in the wine the true body and blood of Christ, according to the words: This is my body, this is my blood." The Augsburg Confession then confesses this same true presence of the true body and blood.

3. *Negotiations with Bucer. The Wittenberg Concord. Luther's New Assault upon the Zwinglians.*

TETRAPOLITANA—FOOD FOR THE SOUL—BUCER—RECEPTION BY THE UNGODLY—ACQUIESCENCE OF UPPER GERMANY—COLLOQUY AT CASSEL—WITTENBERG CONCORD—"UNWORTHY VS. UNGODLY"—THE SWISS FAIL TO APPROVE—CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE OF LUTHER—COLOGNE CONSTITUTION—LUTHER AROUSED—SEVEN FANATICAL SPIRITS—MELANCHTHON, BUCER AND CALVIN—WARNING TO BOHEMIANS—DENUNCIATION OF ZWINGLIANISM.

Luther and Zwingli themselves took no further steps to secure an approximation in their distinctive views. Zwingli's concep-

[1] Briefe, iii, 511, 516; iv, 29.

tion of the sacrament, as advanced by him again in his *Fidei ratio ad Carolum imperator* and in his *Letter to the German Princes Assembled at Augsburg in 1530*, continued to be such that we cannot be surprised if Luther persisted in classifying it as essentially in harmony with that of Carlstadt. He not only substitutes the merely spiritual presence of the body of Christ for the bodily, but he persists, also, in locating the essential character of the celebration in the act of confession and thanksgiving upon the part of the communicant, instead of in the reception of the gift from above. The communicants should give thanks while they themselves, in their devout contemplation, set before themselves as present the flesh which Christ assumed and in which He suffered.[1] Luther beheld in this the same mode of conception as that against which he had, in his book against the Heavenly Prophets, objected upon the ground that the Christian must in such case again torture and distress himself anew with his own works, that is, with the enkindling and stimulating of his own devotions.

In the *Confession of the Four Cities* (the *Tetrapolitana*, also presented at Augsburg), which could not accept the confession of the Lutherans on account of the *Eleventh Article*, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper is presented as follows: "Christ deigns to give through the sacraments to all who have sincerely enlisted among His disciples, when they repeat that meal as He has instituted it, His *true* (*verum*) body and his *true* (*verum*) blood *truly* (*vere*) to eat and to drink as food and wine for their souls, by which they shall be nourished unto eternal life, so that now He may live and abide in them and they in Him," etc. The caution is expressly given, that the subscribers of this confession do not wish to be represented as "administering nothing but mere bread and mere wine at our Suppers."[2] The Cities declare further, that their preachers diligently endeavor to turn the attention of the people away from the strife and the superfluous and prying questions upon this subject to that which alone is profitable and which Christ had in view. "For as, fed upon Him,

[1] Cf. in the Fidei Ratio, Artt. VII. and VIII. In the Letter sent to Augsburg, especially the summarizing sentence: "In the Eucharist the *essential thing* (res) is the giving of thanks in faith for the Christ given us from God, but the *Sacrament* (= sign) is the dispensing of the bread, etc."

[2] Confessio Tetrapolitana, Cap. XVIII.

we live in Him and by Him—and are also all among ourselves one bread, one body," etc. Thus, there here still remains the idea, so contrary to Luther's position, *i. e.*, the description of the blessing (gift) of the sacrament as *merely* food for the soul. But the attempt to adopt, as far as possible, the Lutheran propositions as presented at Marburg is very manifest, especially in the designation of the body as the " true " body. And it is particularly noticeable, that the emphasis here, as by Luther himself, appears to be laid upon the dispensing of an objective divine gift in the sacrament, and a corresponding receptivity upon the part of the communicant. In its view, that the nourishment received in the sacrament, which is conceived as a nourishment merely of the soul, is the principal thing, the *Confession* is most nearly related to the *Swabian Syngramma*. The observation, that the subscribers endeavor to restrain their congregations from engaging in unprofitable questions, recalls Luther's vigorous protest against a similar plea in his above-mentioned letter sent to Strassburg in A. D. 1525.[1]

The foremost theologian engaged in the preparation of this *Confession* was Bucer, at Strassburg, who had already in the former year taken a decided stand upon the side of the Swiss theologians, and who was from this time forward unwearied in his efforts to bring about a reconciliation.

Luther at first held austerely aloof, being very loath to place confidence in the self-constituted mediator. So late as September 11th, he writes to Melanchthon, that he does not propose to answer Bucer (who had addressed him), and that he does not trust the treacherous embraces of these people. Their previous teaching has not corresponded with their present professions, and yet they refuse to acknowledge the fact, and manifest no repentance.[2]

Nevertheless, Bucer now succeeded in securing an audience with Luther at Coburg, in the course of which the latter was moved by a profound and heart-felt desire for unity among the adherents of the Gospel, which overpowered all the obstacles interposed by his zeal against heresy and his fears of treachery. He was thus led to assure Bucer of his earnest wish that the schism might be remedied.[3]

[1] Supra, p. 101. [2] Briefe, iv, 162. [3] Ibid., 217.

In a letter addressed to Bucer in the following January, he expressed his delight at the agreement of the *Confession*, in one important proposition, with his own teaching. We both, says he, confess that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Lord's Supper, and are offered with the words as food for the soul. He expresses his surprise, however, that Bucer should refer to Zwingli and Œcolampadius as endorsing this view. But he is still more astonished, that Bucer should be unwilling to recognize the bodily reception also as affording food for the soul. If the presentation of the body of Christ as food for the soul be acknowledged, and if there be no reason for refusing to regard such presentation as made even to the ungodly communicants, although the latter do not receive that which is thus offered, why then should any one be unwilling to confess that the body is also tendered with the bread externally to the mouth, and to the mouth alike of the pious and of the ungodly? The presence and proffer of the body in many places at once (that chief stumbling-stone of the Zwinglians) has evidently been already fully granted in the acceptance of the view that the body is presented to each individual soul. Yet, so long as the point still in dispute is not yielded by the opposite party, Luther feels himself, on conscientious grounds, unable to profess full accord with them. Such a course, he fears, would but occasion yet more serious schism and disturbance; and, despite the concessions made upon the other side, he still contends that in their celebration of the sacrament only bread and wine are received, and that, for this reason, an altar-fellowship, based upon such a profession of harmony as was proposed, would be inadmissible. He writes to this effect to Bucer himself, and shortly afterward, in still more decided terms, to Duke Ernst at Lüneburg, as follows: "There would thus originate the insufferable wrong, that our people (communing with others) would receive mere bread and wine, and yet believe that these were the body and blood of Christ, and their people would receive with us the body and blood of Christ, and yet believe that these were mere bread and wine." He proposes, therefore, to postpone the consideration of the matter for a time, hoping that the grace of God may open the way for further advancement. He repeats with the greatest emphasis the assurance, given at Coburg, of his earnest desire for unity. He desires it, he declares, though its price should be the forfeiting of his

own life thrice over; for he well knows how the cause of the Gospel has suffered from the dissensions among its adherents, and that, had it not been for these, the gates of hell, the entire Papacy, the Turks, the world, the flesh and all the powers of evil could not have wrought such injury.[1]

Other letters of Luther, addressed to various parties, bear evidence to the sincerity of his desire for peace and of his delight in any indications pointing in that direction—and, none the less, to the firmness of his resolution to maintain the positive stand which he had taken. Thus he says, in relation to the reception of the body by the ungodly, in a letter to the Elector John: These men must certainly believe that the devil led Christ bodily to the temple and up upon the high mountain, and that the Jews laid violent hands upon Him and crucified Him; and they must also confess that an ungodly man hears the true Word of God. He wishes also to be fully assured, before proceeding farther, in how far the hopes which Bucer expressed in regard to the position of other Zwinglians were justified by the facts in the case, and whether or no the positions conceded at Coburg were publicly maintained by the latter before their congregations. Bucer himself, as Luther now reports, was not disinclined, even during the colloquy at Coburg, to grant the bodily presence as related to the ungodly.[2] He expressed himself as early as February 5th, before the receipt of Luther's letter, in writing to the Landgrave of Hesse, as acknowledging, with his colleagues in the ministerial office, that since Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper, He is present also in the Word and in our mouth. Touching the reception of the body by the unbelieving, he declares that we ought not to declare against it on any ground that would imply the measuring of the promise of Christ by the faith of men;[3] but yet, on the other hand, some infer from the very words of institution themselves that the actual bestowal of the body is promised only to those true disciples who are also par-

[1] Briefe, iv, 216 sq., 219.

[2] Yet Bucer had at that time already, as in 1536, at Wittenberg (vid. p. 168), made some reservations based on the difference between unworthy guests and total unbelievers. Cf. Luther's statement at Wittenberg, Walch, xvii, 2538.

[3] In this sense, evidently, we are to understand his words, pronounced "dark" by Luther in Briefe, iv, 237 sq.

takers of the new covenant secured through the blood of Christ. Luther regarded this letter of Bucer as a most important step in the direction of harmony, declaring: If they grant that Christ is not alone present to the soul, but that His body is also truly present with the sign of the bread, they thereby grant to the sacrament its true and fitting peculiarity. At the same time, he desired a suspension, for the immediate present, of the disputation as to what the ungodly receive at the communion. Shortly afterward, Luther and Melanchthon received a communication from Bucer, in which he for his part, as Luther reports, professed himself ready to subscribe the statement that "the body of Christ * * * is both proffered by the hand of the ungodly and taken by their mouth" (*impiorum manu porrigi et ore sumi:* the *impiorum* being here evidently designed to qualify also *ore*). The others upon his side conceded that the body is in the sacrament in a corporeal presence, and is thus proffered, but still insisted that this is the case only for believing and pious communicants.[1]

At the convention of the Smalcald League at Schweinfurt in April, 1532, the cities of Upper (Southern) Germany, led by Strassburg, formally adopted the Augsburg Confession, the acceptance of which was demanded as a condition of membership in the League. They declared, as Bucer testified in a report sent to Strassburg, that they accepted this confession together with their own, because both agree in the matter under discussion. At the same time, they deplored the stubbornness of the Swiss, some of whom, including Zwingli (who died October 11, 1531), had never been willing to adopt the formula of Bucer, with its acknowledgment of the "true body."

Bucer now employed all his skill (vainly, indeed, at the time) in the attempt to win over the Swiss to a basis of reconciliation. As he had, in his intercourse with Luther, interpreted the *Tetrapolitan Confession* in as Lutheran a sense as was possible, so he now sought, by his explanations of Luther's position, to remove as far as possible the appearance of harshness which marked the latter in the apprehension of the Swiss. It is not necessary for us to follow more closely the course of his efforts in this direction. They are of present interest to us only as indicating how he thus

[1]Briefe, iv, 218 sq., 223, 224, 327 sq., 236.

made it possible for Luther, at least for a time, to maintain a friendly attitude even toward the stronghold of those sacramentarian teachings which he regarded with so much aversion.

There has been preserved for us no expression of Luther's own opinion in regard to the signing of the Augsburg Confession by the Strassburg leaders. It seemed, however, as though a suspicion that, under this apparent concord, the old Zwinglianism might still linger at least here and there, and might even bring upon himself the reproach of tolerating its errors, would now impel him to new and yet stronger public declarations against it. He thus, in 1532, perhaps at the very time of the convention at Schweinfurt, warned Duke Albrecht of Prussia with all his old-time energy against the "Fanatics" and their sacramental theories. He employed the most offensive and condemnatory language possible in reference to the fallen Zwingli, declaring that he was no martyr, but that the rod of God's anger had fallen upon the Zwinglians, as upon the followers of Münzer, who even yet refused to repent of their errors. He expresses his deep regret, that the victorious cantons have suffered the Zwinglian doctrines to stand in their agreement side by side, as they say, with their old, unassailable confession. Especially noticeable, in this letter, is the appeal of the Reformer, in support of the doctrine of the bodily presence, to the alleged fact that, as it rests upon the clear words of Christ, so has it also hitherto been the constant and harmonious *universal faith of Christendom*. "It is," he affirms, "a dangerous and alarming thing to listen to or believe anything contrary to the harmonious testimony, faith and doctrine of the entire holy Christian Church, maintained harmoniously from the beginning, *i. e.*, for now more than fifteen hundred years, throughout all the world." We recall his similar appeal in 1528, in support of infant baptism, to the universal testimony of the Church.[1] In the same spirit, we find him in December warning the council of the city of Münster against the subtilty of the devil, by which so many preachers of the pure Word have already been induced to forsake the truth and have become Zwinglian, Münzer-ish or Anabaptistic.[2] In the following year, while Bucer was actively engaged in his efforts to conciliate the Swiss, Luther published his letter of warning to the believers

[1] Briefe, iv, 348 sqq. Supra, p. 53 sq. [2] Ibid., 425.

in Frankfort on the Main, cautioning them against the doctrine of Zwingli.[1] In this communication, he makes very special mention of those who now give another explanation of their words, whilst maintaining their former opinions as to the bread and wine —who say that Christ is spiritually, and yet not corporeally, present in the sacrament—who teach that it is not necessary for the ordinary Christian to know how Christ's body is in the sacrament, but only to believe that it is the body which Christ meant to designate—although it is not sufficient for us in our faith in Christ, the true God, to believe that He is the God meant by Christ, and although every pious person must inquire what it is that is given to him. He here again repeats the statement, that, where the former opinion still lingers among these people, nothing is really offered but bread and wine, and nothing more is received by any of the guests; so that the ordinary believer approaches the sacrament, as thus administered, in the faith that the presence of the body is being rightly taught, and receives, after all, only bread and wine. He esteems the preacher who is responsible for such a delusion as a real arch-fiend. He was horrified to hear it proclaimed that both parties should come to the one altar to receive the one sacrament, and that every one would be permitted to cherish the idea that he was receiving the one sacrament, each according to his faith. He charged such a course particularly and publicly upon the ministers at Augsburg, in a letter addressed to the burgomaster and council of that city.[2] Even his own publication of A. D. 1533, *Von der Winkelmesse und Pfaffenweihe*, which discredited the presence of the body in the private masses celebrated in disregard of Christ's own appointment,[3] was interpreted by many as indicating that he was in sympathy with the Sacramentarians, or would in time be found in harmony with them. This led him to issue, in 1534, his *Brief von seinem Buch der Winkelmessen*, in order to testify that he "has not now, nor will to all eternity have, anything to do with the erroneous teaching of Carlstadt, Zwingli and their associates." With all possible distinctness, he declares: There is in the Lord's Supper, when celebrated according to the ordinance of Christ, even under the Papacy or among the Greeks, etc., not a spiritual or imaginary, but the true, proper, natural

[1] Erl. Ed., xxvi, 294–313. [2] Briefe, vi, 145 sq. [3] Vol. I., p. 459.

body of Christ, conceived by Mary through the Holy Ghost and now sitting at the right hand of God; and sinners and unworthy guests also receive this (body) truly and corporeally.[1]

Under these circumstances, Bucer not only found himself called to further labors in Switzerland, where, under pressure of the necessity for a defensive combination with the Lutherans against common outward enemies, a yielding disposition was becoming manifest in ever-widening circles, but he was compelled also to overcome the aversion and suspicions entertained by Luther against even such as had, upon their part, taken all the steps above indicated toward reconciliation. The large measure of success which attended the latter effort became the means of producing one of the most remarkable crises in the history of the German Reformer.

In the autumn of 1534, Landgrave Philip again earnestly urged upon Luther that an effort be made to secure "permanent harmony" with the ministers of Upper Germany. Luther again protests that he would be most heartily glad if such harmony could be attained, and that he will, upon his part, make all concessions which his conscience will allow. But he approaches with reluctance the undertaking, which not he, but others have originated. It appears to him that but few of the preachers of the other party really follow Bucer; and he fears that, instead of a permanent, only an essentially temporary and insecure coalition will be effected.[2] With such misgivings, he consents to the departure of Melanchthon, in the latter part of December, to participate in deliberations with Bucer at Cassel. He confessed to Justus Jonas at the time that the journey appeared to him an utterly useless one; that the more he thought about the matter, the more aversion he felt toward this hopeless attempt at concord, since the other party were so unsettled even among themselves; and that he, for his part, could not swerve from his position, even though the world should crumble in ruins, etc. The letter of advice which he prepared for the occasion is written in a conciliatory spirit. He again gives assurance that he would gladly, if it were possible, banish dissension at the cost of his own body and blood. He concedes that the men who advocate the

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 378 sqq.

[2] October 17, 1534: Briefe, iv, 559.

principles which he opposes may be held to their opinions by conscientious conviction, and he agrees, therefore, to exercise patience toward them—a patience and mildness of judgment which are in striking contrast with the spirit in which he had met overtures of peace at Marburg. In the real matter in hand, however, he does not retreat a single step. He declares at the outset that it is an entirely inadmissible expedient to assume, for the sake of smoothing the way to reconciliation, that both parties have hitherto failed to properly understand one another. He also pronounces utterly impracticable the proposed compromise, that the party which had hitherto regarded the sacrament as a mere sign shall now concede the presence of the true body in connection with the bread, whilst the other party should speak of the bread alone as being eaten. By such a course—to say nothing of the protest of conscience against such a subterfuge—occasion would only be furnished to the people for the discussion of countless new questions and the harboring of strange thoughts, until they should at length believe nothing at all. In support of his own doctrine, he appeals again to the clear language of Scripture, to the utterances of the Fathers, and especially, as before, to the fact, "that it is very dangerous to infer that all Christendom was through so many centuries without a true understanding of the sacrament, inasmuch as we all acknowledge that the sacraments and the Word, although covered over with many abominable practices, have nevertheless been preserved." Summarizing his own opinion in the conclusion, he asserts, in language similar to that of his *Confession of 1528:* "that the body of Christ is truly eaten in and with the bread, and that, therefore, whatever the bread effects or undergoes, the body of Christ effects and undergoes—that it is distributed, eaten and crushed with the teeth." In another brief statement of his view, doubtless originating in the same period, he makes use of the expression, that the body is present "substantially and essentially" (*substantialiter und wesentlich*), in opposition to the theory that it is only "virtually and effectively" (*virtualiter et effective*) present. He represents it as the fundamental principle of the opposing party, that the body of Christ can be present at any place only "locally, spacially, according to breadth and length," whereas it can, in truth, be present also in other ways, and thus at the same time in various places. He, further, expressly asserts this presence in

the sacrament to be designed for the reception also of the ungodly. As to the question, whether, in view of this conflict of opinions, any conciliation could be regarded as attainable, we infer it to have been at that time his own feeling and opinion, that, although this was not to be hoped for, both parties should yet conduct themselves toward one another in a spirit of love, which, while not ignoring the doctrinal differences, should yet at least recognize the honest intentions of opponents. As he pledges himself to the exercise of such consideration toward the other party, he expects to enjoy it also at their hands. He, too, claims to be in good conscience bound to his convictions; and they should, therefore, also bear with him when they cannot share his views.[1] That Bucer and the other ministers should concur in the positions taken in this letter of advice without demurring, far exceeded the expectations of Luther. They not only proclaimed their purpose to teach in accordance with the Augsburg Confession, but they even accepted the declarations, that the body of Christ is truly and *essentially* offered, received and eaten in the bread. Bucer added, indeed, the word of caution, that no commingling of the essence of bread and body dare here be thought of, but only a sacramental combination: and he allayed the apprehension which Luther's proposition, that the body undergoes whatever the bread undergoes, was calculated to awaken, by the explanation, that the body does not, therefore, become food for the stomach, but that the statements thus made have reference to the bread sacramentally united with the body (and are only on account of this union applied in our speech also to the body). In support of these explanations, he was able to appeal to language employed by Luther himself when speaking of the sacramental union.[2] The special question as to the reception of the body by the unbelieving was not brought into the discussion at Cassel.

[1] Briefe, iv, 569–574. How firmly he, on the other hand, persisted in his condemnation of those who denied the real presence and even of those who merely regarded the doctrine as uncertain, and how he opposed to every argument based on the supposed obligation of love the supreme claims of faith and the Word, may be seen especially in his Commentary upon Galatians, which appeared in 1535. Cf. particularly in the latter work, vol. ii, pp. 334–340.

[2] Walch, xvii, 2492 sq. Cf. also the exposition of the Augsburg ministers, A. D. 1533, given in Walch, xvii., 2472.

These surprisingly favorable results now produced another revolution in the attitude of Luther. He surrenders not a single point of his own convictions, and he remains very suspicious of the attempt to completely assimilate the opposite forces. Yet, even in his own mind, that which had heretofore been little more than a mere wish, now becomes an earnest, joyous, vigorous hope: and in the expectation that the path now honestly chosen by the theologians of Upper Germany would of itself lead them on to the acceptance of the full truth as maintained by himself, he refrains from continuously and uniformly urging the latter upon them in all its rigor. He even himself undertakes to modify the zeal and allay the suspicions against their recent opponents in which many of his own associates, as in particular Amsdorf, now surpassed their leader.

In the latter part of January, 1535, he declares, in a letter to the Landgrave and in a formal statement of his opinion,[1] that he confidently hopes that there are many among them who are perfectly sincere, and that he is, therefore, the more inclined to a reconciliation; that he cannot reject the concord which they have established by their acceptance of the *Confession* and the *Apology;* and that he can find no occasion at this time to criticise the language of their present confession, *i. e.*, that the body of Christ is essentially dispensed and eaten, provided they heartily accept what this language involves. In their adoption of it he thinks sufficient progress has been made in the direction of unity, until God shall open the way for further advances. Not all the adherents of either party have yet been consulted, and upon his own side many are slow to believe that the others really mean what they say. It will be well to allow an opportunity for the troubled waters to settle on both sides. He promises that, if he himself can do or suffer anything for the completion of the work thus begun, he shall not be found wanting. In regard to the actual questions in controversy, we cannot fail to note that he declares only that he finds nothing to criticise "at this time" in the language of the other party, thus indicating plainly enough that he does not as yet find the *whole* truth confessed by them.

During the following summer and the succeeding months, he frequently sent kind, encouraging and hopeful letters to Strass-

[1] Briefe, iv, 587 sqq.

burg, Augsburg, Ulm and Esslingen.[1] To the ministers at Augsburg, for example, he writes that, in the entire progress of the evangelical revival, nothing has occurred to give him greater joy than that, after the sad alienation, he is at length enabled to hope for—yea, even to *see*—an honest harmony among the adherents of the Gospel; that he will gladly undertake anything that may lie in his power to firmly establish such concord; and that, should success crown the movement, he will then sing through tears of joy: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace. In other connections also he now frequently refers to the prospect of an early departure, and expresses the earnest desire that he may first be permitted to see peace restored to the Church and may then close his eyes in the midst of love and spiritual harmony.

The most positive expression of the Reformer's willingness to make concessions, and even to overlook any differences yet remaining, is found in a communication, addressed also to the *Friends at Augsburg*, under date of October 5th of the same year. He here proposes a convention for the express purpose: "in order that we may learn to know one another thoroughly, and that, if there be yet anything further which can be *tolerated*, *conceded*, or *dissimulated*, we may discover it and mutually decide upon it, that the adversaries may not make an elephant out of a mouse." To the preacher, Forster, who was engaged in the service of the church at Wittenberg, but had been called to Augsburg, he gave a dismissal to the latter place, to testify his sincere desire to confirm the new relations of harmony. When the council of Augsburg offered to the decided Lutheran, Huberinus, the position of assistant to Maüslein (Musculus), a former Sacramentarian, Luther himself advised the former, although he had in the year 1532 strenuously warned him against fellowship with the Fanatics or their official representatives,[2] to accept the position, in the tender of which he recognized a public testimony upon the part of the Augsburg authorities of their full acceptance of the Lutheran doctrine; for any other interpretation of the call he could not and would not entertain.

The proposed personal colloquy, by means of which it was

[1] Cf. here and in following context: Briefe, iv, 613 sq.; vi, 162, 164; iv, 623, 636–642, 651–654, 671, 682, 691–695.

[2] Briefe, iv, 330.

hoped that a full mutual understanding might be arrived at, was still advocated, especially by Luther, and was finally held in May, 1536. On the 21st of this month, Luther, prevented by sickness from journeying to Eisenach, the place first selected for the gathering, was met at Wittenberg by Bucer (who had in the meantime achieved some results in Switzerland, especially through his labors in connection with the first Helvetic, or second Basle Confession), the latter's associate, Capito, Musculus and Wolfhardt (Lykosthenes), of Augsburg, and a number of other ministers from Ulm, Reutlingen, Esslingen and Frankfort.[1] But, to the dismay of the visitors, especially of Bucer, they found Luther in a mood of very decided hostility toward the conciliatory movement. Very inopportunely, letters of Zwingli and Œcolampadius, containing damaging utterances, had but a short time before been given to the press with the knowledge of Bucer and accompanied with a letter from him. At this Luther took serious offence. He refused to have anything to do with any reconciliation unless it should be a genuine one. He, therefore, called for a public recantation upon the part of all who had sincerely renounced the false doctrine which they had previously held. As evidence of the acceptance of the true doctrine, he was now no longer satisfied with the propositions affirming the presence and reception of the essential body, but demanded the express declaration, that the body is received no less by the unworthy and the ungodly (*impiis*) than by the pious. He acknowledged that the representatives of Upper Germany had gradually approached his position. He finds them now advanced to the confession that the bread is the true, natural body of Christ, received by communicants with the mouth. But they still consider it, when given to the unbelieving, as mere bread; and hence, according to their teaching, the body of Christ is, after all, not present by the power of Christ and His appointment, but rather by the power of our faith. He now demands from them a public expression upon the question, whether the bread is the body by virtue of the power of Christ, who has so appointed, irrespective of the worthiness or unworthiness of the administrant or the recipient—whether, consequently, the sacrament is dis-

[1] Cf., in connection with the following, the report of Myconius, Walch, xvii, 2532 sqq., and that of the Frankfort delegate, Bernard, Walch, 2543 sqq.

pensed without discrimination to the pious and the wicked.[1] This demand was made by Luther on May 22d; and he desired to have a response on the following day.

Accordingly, on May 23d, Bucer declared himself and his associates prepared to recall whatever they had wrongfully taught—under strenuous protestation, however, that they had never taught a distribution of mere bread and wine, and that they had formerly understood Luther merely as representing the combination of the body with the bread and wine in entirely too gross a manner. He expressly acknowledged, further, the reception of the body with the mouth, and by the *unworthy* to condemnation, as well as by the worthy to salvation. As to the reception of the body by the *ungodly*, he added, according to Myconius, that when he denied this, he had reference only to Turks and Jews, or to mice and worms devouring one of the wafers stored away by the Papists. According to the report of the Frankfort delegate, Bernard, he said: Those who *pervert the Word and ordinance of the Lord in the sacrament* receive mere bread and wine; those who retain the Word and ordinance of the Lord and believe in the sacrament, even though they have not true, living faith in Christ, and hence receive the sacrament unworthily, nevertheless receive the true body. To the remark of Bugenhagen, that, according to that theory, it might still be said that the unworthy do not receive the body, Bucer, according to Bernard, replied: "Yes, in so far as they fail to meet the condition, where the Word and ordinance of the Lord are preserved, which condition is also laid down in the writings of Dr. Luther: for many, alas, who believe, indeed, in the institution of the ordinance, very poorly discern the Lord's body, and hence receive the body unworthily. But of those who have no faith at all, but come to the Supper with only sense and reason to guide them, we hold that they *receive only bread and wine*, although, indeed, with the bread and wine are *set before* them, by the institution of the Lord and the service of the Church, the true body and the true blood; for the institution of the Lord certainly does not depend upon the faith or unbelief of any man."

The other delegates, interrogated by Luther, all separately assented to the confession of Bucer touching the true presence

[1] Cf. the report of Myconius.

of the body, and asserted further, that their rulers had affixed penalties for the denial of such a presence.

Luther again, according to Myconius, called upon them to acknowledge that the bread is the body of Christ by virtue of the power and appointment of the Lord, whether the unworthy abuse or the worthy properly use it. Thus their confession was now finally adopted. In regard to the question concerning the participation of the ungodly, they were, according to Myconius, advised, in case the assertion that the ungodly receive the true body of Christ should be thought too strong to find acceptance among their people, to employ, for the present, the term "unworthy," as used by St. Paul, and yet to expound clearly the real point at issue; or, instead of speaking of the ungodly (who do not receive the body), to use the term "unbelieving" (*i. e.*, without true faith). According to Bernard's account, Luther said in reference to these discussions: "You now take offence only in the case of the ungodly, and confess, as Paul declares, that the unworthy receive the body of the Lord, where the appointment and words of the Lord are not perverted. Upon that point we will not quarrel."

Finally, a formula prepared by Melanchthon was subscribed by all present, the decisive propositions of which are as follows: "Bucer, etc., confess * * * that with the bread and wine are truly and substantially present, exhibited and received the body and blood of Christ; and although * * * they do not believe that there is any local inclusion in the bread, nor any combination enduring beyond the actual celebration of the sacrament (both of which ideas were rejected by Luther as well), nevertheless, they grant that the bread is, by a sacramental union, the body of Christ; that is, they believe that, with the offered bread, there is at the same time present and truly exhibited the body of Christ; and hence, that this institution of the sacrament has validity in the Church, and does not depend upon the worthiness of the administrant nor of the recipient. Wherefore, as Paul says that the unworthy also eat, they, therefore, believe that the body and blood of the Lord are truly offered even to the unworthy, and that the *unworthy receive* them, where the words and ordinance of Christ are preserved; but such receive only to their own condemnation, because they abuse the sacrament, since they employ it without penitence and *without faith*." The

agreement was thus consummated. It was yet kept in hand only in order to secure expressions of opinion and endorsement from the absent pastors and dignitaries.

Such was the course of proceedings at Wittenberg. And thus, again, the point in which the differences among the theologians were really concentrated, *i. e.*, the question in relation to the ungodly, or unbelieving, was left unsettled, whilst in other points they appeared to be in harmony. The two reports of the conference agree in presenting this as the general result of the colloquy.[1] But how are we to understand Luther's final attitude in this matter?

That Bucer and his associates of Upper Germany, even during the Wittenberg colloquy, clearly enough held a conception quite different from that of Luther upon the disputed point, is evident from the reports preserved. In support of the position, that, in a celebration of the Lord's Supper in which the words of institution were denied through disbelief of the truth which they embody, the body of Christ is not present, but only bread and wine, Bucer was able, indeed, to appeal directly to Luther himself, as he actually did in the above-cited reply to Bugenhagen.[2] But Luther, when expressing himself thus in regard to the communion of the Sacramentarians, had reference to cases in which the administrators of the sacrament and entire congregations—at least in the persons of their representatives and in their confessions—were guilty of such denial, and thus of apostasy from the ordinance of Christ; and, in such cases, he was so far from acknowledging the presence of the body as to claim that it was not even there partaken of by believing communicants who might be present. But, on the other hand, wherever the Supper is celebrated by a church with faith in the words of institution and in accordance with the appointment of Christ, there the presence of the body is, for him, such an absolute objective reality, that the true body, he maintains, is received even by such of the congregation as may be total unbelievers. Bucer maintained, on the contrary, that in the latter case, although the body is, indeed, exhibited to all, it does not enter into such communicants as are total unbelievers. Thus, even where the

[1] Planck, Geschichte des protestantischen Lehrbegriffs, 1796, vol. iii, chap. i, p. 380, has evidently entirely overlooked the report of Bernard.

[2] Cf. also the Augsburg Ministers, Walch, xvii, 2476.

sacrament is dispensed in accordance with Christ's appointment and in the power of Christ, he yet in so far makes the reception of the body dependent upon the faith of the recipient. The question may here be naturally raised, whether the doctrine of the theologians of Upper Germany might not still be interpreted as being simply, that the true presence of the essential body is merely a presence for the spirit, or for the devout exaltation of the individual? The distinction made by Bucer between those who do not at all believe the words, and those who lack only a true, living faith in Christ, does not in the least conflict with such an interpretation; for, even in the case of the latter class, we may conceive as finding place, along with their deficiency in living faith and their consequent unworthiness, a certain exaltation of thought to the contemplation of the body exhibited to mental view in the sacrament. At all events, the difference upon this point proved persistent.

Luther was, upon his part, determined in no case to depart in the least from the full substance of his doctrine. He placed such entire confidence, also, in the confession of the theologians of Upper Germany, acknowledging the presence of the body as assured by the words and power of Christ, that he would entertain no suspicion of any such interpretation as has been above suggested. Moreover, the formula of the Wittenberg Concord was couched in such terms as would seem to indicate that it was designed to set forth simply *his own* views. The idea of an eating by mice or worms, and that of a presence of the body in a celebration among Turks, or other total unbelievers, were entirely excluded by the denial of the "*durabilis conjunctio*" and by the clause, "*institutionem sacram valere in ecclesia*"—and this, in entire harmony with Luther's views as elsewhere expressed. In the case of the observance of the Supper by a congregation which relies upon the appointment by Christ, there is not only no suggestion of any discrimination between unbelieving and unworthy participants, but the words last cited above from the formula combine lack of faith and unworthiness as traits of the same individuals. Bucer's view could be reconciled with this language only by the mental reservation, that by "without faith" is here meant only the lack of true faith, and that the formula takes no notice at all of cases of entire disbelief of the words of Christ.

It must be said, in truth, that, even after all the deliberations at Wittenberg, such a reservation was at least not made impossible. That Luther did not insist upon a more clear and positive deliverance upon this point is very significant. He was not the man to so completely overlook the point of difference from motives of policy or diplomacy. He could do so only if convinced that the theologians in question, although not making a confession entirely accordant with his views, were yet maintaining the fundamental point in the doctrine of the sacrament, and by discriminating between this fundamental position and an inference which was less essential although, to his mind, logically necessary. He may yet have cherished also the hope, that an honest adherence to that which they had now actually confessed would, by an inner necessity, lead those who yet differed with him to recognize the inconsistency of their view upon this point and themselves abandon it. But we cannot comprehend even the cherishing of such a hope upon his part, except as we recognize in it evidence of a profound longing for harmony, arising from a consciousness of the common possession of evangelical truth, which, in the last decisive moment of the colloquy, led him to ignore all the suspicious circumstances which plainly enough tended to discourage these bright anticipations.

Nothing but this same feeling can account, finally, for the tone which he now assumed in dealing with the hitherto stubborn Swiss advocates of Zwinglianism.

We can clearly recognize the great chasm which yawns between the propositions of the *Helvetic Confession*, which Bucer had sought to frame in the closest possible accord with that of the Lutherans, and the Lutheran document which he had now signed. The former confesses, "that the Lord truly offers to *His own* (followers) in the Lord's Supper His body and His blood, that is, Himself, in order that He may more and more live in them and they in Him."[1] Then, after the rejection of a "natural" combination of the bread and body, of a spacial inclusion of the body, and of every "bodily, carnal" presence—it is held, "that bread and wine are true signs, through which * * * the true communion of the body and blood of Christ (the approved German translation here inserts the words "to believers") are set

[1] Cf. supra, citations from the Tetrapolitana.

forth and presented (*exhibeatur : angeboten*), not as perishable food for the stomach, but as a nourishment of eternal life." A discrimination being made between signs and the things signified (*res*), there are named as the *res*, or the "essential and spiritual" part of the sacrament, the communion of the body of Christ, the purchased salvation (according to the German version, the salvation "won on the cross"), and the forgiveness of sins. All this, it is said, is received through the faith of the spirit, as the signs through the mouth of the body. We can find here no room for a corporeal reception of the body, nor for a reception of it by the unbelieving. Nothing is said even of a presence (*adesse*) of the body; it is only a presenting (*exhiberi*) that is spoken of. No wonder that, when Bucer now came with the Wittenberg formula, the adherents of the former confession would have nothing to do with it or with him. In vain did he seek to deny the significance of the differences noted; in vain appealed to the fact, that Luther did not mean to teach any local presence, nor any inclusion of the body. The Swiss confessors could not at all accept the kind of an unlocalized bodily presence which Luther taught, nor were they satisfied with the reservation which Bucer sought to make to cover the case of ungodly communicants. They finally, at the convention of Basle, on November 12th, 1536, decided to address Luther himself. They re-affirmed their adherence to the old Zwinglian propositions, that Christ has departed from the world, is sitting at the right hand of God, and is not to be again brought down thence into the earthly state; and that the body of Christ cannot, therefore, be corporeally eaten, nor can Christ Himself be corporeally present everywhere. They then declare, that, according to Bucer's interpretation, the new formula would not alter their old confession to which they wish to adhere; that the bodily ascension of Christ to heaven, in consequence of which He is no longer carnally in the world, but remains in His heavenly state, would not be denied; and it would not be questioned, that He is apprehended and received in the Lord's Supper only by a believing heart. Upon the basis of these premises, and only upon such basis, would they cheerfully unite in the conciliatory movement.

Let us now observe the attitude which Luther assumed toward such propositions. To judge of it properly, we must glance at his separate deliverances upon the subject. We find the first

response to the communication of the Swiss theologians, which reached him by the hand of Bucer in February, 1537, in a *Letter to the Burgomaster of Basle*, under date of February 17th. Without entering at all upon the consideration of the doctrinal points presented, he joyfully recognizes the zeal with which the cause of the Gospel is prosecuted upon their part, and implores that God may grant yet more grace for the establishment of a secure and harmonious system of doctrine. Meanwhile, he most earnestly entreats the burgomaster to use influence among his own people, that, despite the suspicions which may yet linger here and there, matters may be quietly allowed to settle down, and the now slumbering birds of discord be not scared up again. He promises to make a valiant effort to maintain such a course himself, as, indeed, all is already quiet in his neighborhood, both in the pulpit and among the people. Thus all should strive for harmony with patience, gentleness, kindness in speech and, above all, with earnest prayer to God.[1] Soon after this, on March 1st, Bucer and Wolfhardt visited Luther at Gotha, where the latter had been taken seriously ill while on his homeward journey from the Smalcald convention.[2] Face to face with death, he speaks with great earnestness and frankness again of the attitude of his visitors upon the question of the sacrament, in which they have not yet gone far enough to satisfy him. Personally, he is entirely willing to have patience with them, and to believe that, since the matter has been dragged into such depths of error, they cannot so suddenly bring it out into the clear and undo all the mischief that has been wrought. He does not conceal from them the fact, that many upon his side have not yet been able to overcome their feelings of distrust, and that they themselves have, by their published works and public teaching, especially by their "turncoating," given occasion for such apprehensions. He again protests especially against all representations upon their part, that there had been in earlier periods merely a lack of mutual understanding, maintaining that he, at least, had thoroughly understood them. He now deems it best, that they should either be silent

[1] Briefe, v, 54 sqq,

[2] A report of the following deliverances of Luther, which bears the distinct impress of historical accuracy, is found in the Tischreden xix, § 42, Förstemann, ii, 320 sqq. The utterance itself has been mistaken for a letter and attributed to the year 1532. Cf. ibid, and also Briefe, vi, 483, Anm.

upon this point (*i. e.*, evidently, cease such attempts to justify the past) and hereafter teach rightly, or that they should acknowledge publicly and without reserve that they had been in error. He foresees, indeed, that such a course would again occasion dissatisfaction among their adherents; but he thinks that what cannot be done at once might be accomplished within a quarter or half-year, or, at least, within an entire year. He refers the Swiss to his very friendly letter forwarded to the burgomaster of Basle, advising them to refer to the latter in case of his own early death. Should his life be spared, he will very gladly render the most faithful and affectionate service with his pen to the people who have written to him in so kind a spirit. To the Swiss cities in general, which had appealed to him, he does not reply until December 1st, having, however, previously assured them through Melanchthon of his favorable reception of their communication. In the letter now sent to them, laying aside all doubts hitherto entertained as to the sincerity of their ministers, he recognizes it as their full and earnest purpose to accept and promote the Concord, although there may yet be some upon both sides who regard it with suspicion. It is too much to expect, that such a great schism should be remedied so easily and quickly without leaving some scratches and scars. The proper course is, therefore, to silence loud-mouthed disturbers of the peace, and to advise the people to entrust the management of the Concord to the persons properly called and qualified for such work. He then makes an explanation of some matters connected with the doctrine of the sacrament, declaring, with evident reference to the propositions laid before him by the Swiss: "We have never yet taught that Christ descends from heaven, or from the right hand of God, or ascends to such a position, either visibly or invisibly; but we hold firmly to the article of the Creed: 'Ascended to heaven,' etc., and commit to the divine omnipotence the question, how His body and blood are given to us in the Lord's Supper. We do not therein think of any ascent or descent as taking place, but we hold absolutely and simply to the words: This is my body." He confines himself, however, in his reply, to this one point—the rebuttal of the idea that any damage is done to the doctrine of the continuance of Christ in the state of heavenly exaltation by his "absolute and simple" adherence to the words of institution, upon which point the Swiss, according to their letter, made

everything to depend. He utters not a single word from which the inference might be drawn, that he, in his acceptance of the Wittenberg formula, did not mean to still strenuously maintain the bodily reception and the actual participation of the ungodly. On the contrary, his readers must not only have been able to infer with certainty from all his former writings what a real presentation and presence of the body he would have them deduce from the simple understanding of the words of institution here insisted upon and from the divine omnipotence here likewise emphasized; but, in addition, the *Smalcald Articles*, then fresh from his pen, again maintained most positively the reception of the true body by the ungodly as well as by the pious. Yet it is true, on the other hand, that he did entirely refrain from setting forth plainly in his present communication his own theory, and the features in which it was irreconcilable with the interpretation now given to the formula of concord by the Swiss. He merely adds the remark: "Yet, as I have said above, if we cannot fully understand one another in this matter, it will be best for us, for the present, to treat one another kindly and always put the best construction upon one another's words and actions, until the troubled waters shall have settled themselves. Dr. Capito and Magister Bucer can also thus counsel all, if we but heartily agree upon this course, and lay aside all malice, in order that the Holy Spirit may have opportunity to further promote love and, finally, concord," etc.[1] Immediately afterwards, he declares to Bucer, to whom he at once sent a copy of the above letter, as a guide in the furtherance of the peace movement committed to direction of the latter and Capito,[2] that they have made his undertaking a difficult one by their report that some upon their side into whose hands his letter might fall did not yet favor the Concord. He remarks, further, that the Helvetic Confession (of 1536) does not please him quite as well as the German confession of the cities (evidently the *Tetrapolitan*, which appeared also in German in 1531). The spiritual presence was, in fact, more distinctly emphasized in contradistinction from the bodily than in the latter document. When, at length, the Swiss were fully prepared to enter into the movement—although only with the explanations above indicated—and had, on May 4th,

[1] Briefe, v, 83 sqq. [2] Ibid, v, 87.

1538, addressed another letter to him upon the subject, he again, in his reply of June 9th, refrains from discussing any point of doctrine, except that referred to in his previous communication. "I have been very glad to observe therein" (*i. e.*, in their letter), says he, "that your hearts are all prepared for concord, and that you were pleased with my letter testifying that we do not here teach that there is in the sacrament an ascending and descending of the Lord, yet we do hold that the true body and blood are there received under bread and wine." Upon the precise question as to the bodily or spiritual reception, he again says nothing. For further instruction he again refers them to Bucer and Capito. He assures them that he has no doubt that they have a pious little flock, that earnestly desires to live and act aright. In this he rejoices, and devoutly hopes that, if they be, indeed, as yet somewhat restrained by a hedge (of errors), God may in due time assist them to a joyful deliverance. Although he might still hesitate to fully trust some among them, on account of the character of their publications, he has contented himself with expressing his fears to Bucer. He will give all credit even to such, as far as may be possible, until they also arrive at the full truth. He accordingly beseeches them to continue their efforts for the accomplishment of the divine work so well begun.[1]

Meanwhile Bullinger, who was a most decided advocate of the Swiss position, especially as opposed to Bucer, had also opened communication with Luther by the sending of two of his publications to the latter. He had shortly before published Zwingli's *Christianae fidei * * * expositio*, etc., which was most highly calculated, by its theses upon the Lord's Supper, to arouse anew the zeal of Luther against the Sacramentarians, and, by its utterances touching the salvation of the heathen,[2] to awaken his indignation against Zwingli's entire conception of Christianity. Nevertheless, Luther replies to him, under date of May 14th, 1538, in a gentle though earnest tone. He candidly expresses his disapproval of the publication of a writing in which there is so much to give offence to all pious people. At the same time, however, he assures his correspondent that the death of Zwingli and Œcolampadius had very deeply pained him, declaring, further, that he had ever since the Marburg Colloquy

[1] Briefe, v, 120 sq.

[2] Cf. infra, p. 189.

regarded the former as an excellent man. Yet he is careful to maintain his own convictions by pronouncing it to be the source of deepest grief to him, that he should be compelled to think of Zwingli as persisting to the end in his opposition. He still further declares, with perfect candor, that he cannot approve all that is said by Bullinger and his party, just as the latter may perhaps charge him with error—of which charge God must be the judge. On the other hand, he now again solemnly affirms that nothing that could happen would give him such joy as that God should, before his departure, at length grant to his Church the spirit of unity.[1]

During the progress of the negotiations looking toward harmony, he repeatedly expressed his satisfaction and hopes, not only to individuals representing the opposing party, but also to his own friends, as, for example, to the Duke of Prussia. To the latter he writes, under date of August, 1538, that he hopes in a short time to secure a happy concord.[2]

We turn now to the important question, how the entire attitude assumed by Luther during these negotiations is to be reconciled with the principles which he had hitherto, and under other circumstances, so stoutly maintained. In view of the much sterner bearing which marked his intercourse with the theologians of Upper Germany in 1536, what can have been his real impressions and hopes in regard to these Swiss? Two things, at least, must here be regarded as certain. In the first place, Luther, in so far as he approached them, acted under the conviction that their positive confession of the reception of an objective heavenly gift as the essential feature of the sacrament constituted, at all events —even leaving out of view the concession of a bodily reception— a fundamental distinction from the theory of Zwinglianism. He acted in the confident assurance that the latter had been vanquished, at least among the honest members of the opposite party, who now took part in the negotiations for peace. That his opinion of it had never been modified in the least, is evident enough from his letter to Bullinger cited above. In so far as he yet cherished suspicions against particular persons, these were based upon the fear that the latter yet persisted in their attachment to Zwinglianism, although dishonestly subscribing articles

[1] Briefe, v, 111 sq. [2] Ibid., 107, 124.

which, in his opinion, implied an utter rejection of that system. In the second place, it is evident that he can by no means have cherished the conviction that the opposite party in these negotiations had, even in regard to the bodily presence, as he taught it and as he held it to be confessed in the Wittenberg Concord, really come over to his own position. If he did not fail to note the difference still remaining between himself and his brethren of Upper Germany, such an overlooking of the chasm between his view of the bodily presence and that of these men of Switzerland, who had themselves so plainly informed him of *their* understanding of the language employed, must have been utterly impossible. Why did he, if unconscious of this difference, so persistently, even in his friendly reply to their appeal, avoid a positive acceptance of their interpretation as his own? We are compelled, therefore, to infer that harmony with them, despite this recognized difference, appeared to him not impossible.

We must, however, be on our guard, lest we infer too much from the above. Luther did not mean by his participation in the negotiations in question to yield any portion of his full and strict doctrine of a bodily reception, nor to grant in the least that the point of difference was of small account. He defends himself, particularly, in a letter addressed to Isny,[1] against the charge of having forsaken his former position, in order that such boasting by the other party may not turn the concord into a worse discord. Should any one be inclined to infer from the forbearing attitude of Luther that he was merely seeking to avoid a discussion of the question at issue, or that he would have been satisfied if merely allowed to quietly maintain his own personal opinion, such estimates of the situation must be utterly dissipated by the declaration in the *Smalcald Articles* in 1537: "that bread and wine are the true body and blood of Christ, and are offered to and received not only by pious, but also by ungodly Christians." He could prepare no statement of faith for evangelical believers without such clear enunciation of this doctrine; nor does he stop at all to consider, in this case, that among the allies in Upper Germany of the Smalcald League, which was expected to accept this confession, a discrimination is yet made between the unworthy and the ungodly; still less, that hopes are now entertained

[1] Briefe, v, 89.

of enlisting in the League the Swiss Reformers, who would certainly take offence at such an unequivocal statement of the doctrine. Yet, in his dealings with the Swiss, he does not, as yet, even urge upon them an assent to these propositions. On the contrary, whilst refuting the charge of the Zwinglians against his own doctrine as irreconcilable with the Saviour's state of exaltation in heaven, he quietly permits them to retain their own interpretation of the true, and yet only spiritual, dispensing of the body; and for further instruction, he directs them to Bucer, who, as he well knew, would certainly not insist upon that particular feature of the doctrine. He cannot and will not himself approve the interpretation in question; but he entrusts the work of reconciliation to one who is willing to concede it. For a long time he carefully refrains from any public utterance which would indicate that he regarded the reconciliation as actually accomplished by the partial concord secured, and merely expresses the wish and hope that further progress may be made in that direction. But at length he speaks of the matter in such a way as to indicate that he regards the reconciliation with the leading Swiss Reformers as an accomplished fact, and that he still cherishes suspicion only in the case of certain individuals, and is chiefly concerned for a proper direction of the people in the matter. He may have further reflected, that the Swiss, allowed to retain their own view, would at any rate occupy but a subordinate position as compared with the German Lutheran churches, which confessed the full truth concerning the sacrament in entire accordance with *his* view of it, and among whom, at that very time, his new *Smalcald Confession* was being received without opposition. It is possible that he may even have cherished the hope that, when the Swiss should have once actually entered into relations of harmony with the Germans, and when the "troubled waters should have become clear," their aberrations might of themselves quietly disappear.

Explain it as we may, however, the fact remains, that *while these Swiss theologians were still at variance with the position of Luther, he was willing to extend to them the hand of reconciliation and peace.* This was a kind of patience entirely different from that promised at Marburg, in which merely violent contention and abuse were to be avoided, whilst, on the other hand, Christian fellowship was still to be denied. It was also very much more than the theologians of Upper Germany had secured at Witten-

berg, where, in subscribing the formula, with its strong and decided language, the latter had been permitted to interpret it in their own way, but could not have ventured to express their views with such boldness as did these men of Switzerland. What can it have been that made the unbending Luther now so yielding? He himself still speaks often of the gain which would result from a combination of evangelical believers against their enemies, whereas a failure of these negotiations would "occasion a new fools' jollification among the Papists."[1] But even now we cannot persuade ourselves that purely outward aims or considerations can have forced from him a concession against which his conviction of the magnitude of the yet remaining difference of views protested. We must conclude, either that a spasm of amiable weakness beclouded the vision otherwise so keen, and broke the power of the will otherwise so sturdy; or we must—as we hereby do—fall back again, for explanation of his attitude towards the Swiss theologians, upon the feeling and inner conviction, that the agreement in that which was fundamentally essential had now come to overbalance the difference upon that one point in which the latter had not as yet recognized the full meaning of the truth —that these men had now no longer, like Zwingli, "another spirit," but, despite their imperfections, the true evangelical spirit. Nor is the case, in this view of it, without parallel in Luther's previous history. We recall the moderation and kindness with which he spoke of the *Bohemian Brethren*, and to them, in regard to their sacramental theory, and, especially, his attitude toward the *Swabian Syngramma*. This inner conviction, indeed, never secures a clear and independent analysis or expression in his writings. This, again, is closely connected with the fact, that he was never willing to go into extended explanations in response to the communications received from these men. Nor are we able to determine in what position, according to the view and aim of Luther, the Swiss would have been placed, had they entered into a league with the German Lutherans upon the basis of common confessions, such as that submitted at Smalcald. There is in so far, therefore, a lack of inner assurance and logical consistency in his course during this period, which makes it the easier to understand the fresh and violent outbreak of the polemic

[1] Briefe, v, 125

spirit, which is so soon afterward manifest in his writings. Yet the object of this new assault is not the propositions themselves which were heretofore tolerated by him, but the Zwinglianism which he discovered lurking beneath them.

If we study carefully the bearing of Luther in the period immediately following the negotiations above described, we shall observe that he does not regard himself as limited in the least, in the discharge of the duty of testifying against the errors of Zwingli, by his relations with the other Swiss theologians. In the year immediately following, 1539, he, in his tract, *Von den Conciliis und Kirchen*, charges Zwingli with Nestorianism, and mentions with him other Nestorians against whom he has had to contend.[1] He again refutes his arguments against the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, in a letter to Francis Rheva, Count of Thurn, who had been unsettled in his faith by them.[2] In reply to the argument, that the body of Christ cannot be at the same time in heaven and in the sacrament, he here simply appeals to the omnipotence of God, and to John iii. 13. In a letter to Bucer, dated October 14th, he expresses, on the contrary, the fullest confidence in the latter, and in the latter's associates as well. At the same time, he refers in terms of high appreciation to Calvin, who was then living in Strassburg, and with whose *Institutio religionis Christianae* he must have become acquainted at that time.[3] He writes: "Salute most respectfully for me Drs. J. Sturm and J. Calvin, whose little books I have read with singular pleasure." Calvin, who reported this with great delight to Farel, adds the remark: "Now think what I say there about the Eucharist." It is, indeed, true, that, in view of the importance of this doctrine, the approval of Luther must be regarded as having particular reference to the treatment accorded *to it* by Calvin—another evidence for us, that Luther was at that time satisfied with vigorous testimony for the essential character of the Lord's Supper as a true reception of Christ, even where positive declarations concerning the bodily presence were lacking. Such testimony he here found in a form so full and vivid, that a parallel could scarcely have been discovered in the utterances of any preacher in the cities of Upper Germany.[4]

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 314. [2] Briefe, v, 199 sq.
[3] Calvin's tract, "De sacra coena," did not appear until 1540.
[4] Briefe, v, 211. Cf. Henry, Life of Calvin, i, 267.

But the Swiss were by no means disposed to bear with patience the assaults upon their chief Reformer. Bullinger protested, in the name of the Zurich ministers, against the course of Luther. In the latter, meanwhile, were aroused anew and with constantly increasing force suspicion, indignation and open hostility toward the false teaching which he now found to be not by any means renounced, as he had hoped, nor even cherished in silence by its adherents, but spreading more widely than ever. We have no direct information as to the precise effects produced in his own mind by these manifestations during the period immediately following. The first instance of renewed passionate utterances against the Swiss is found in his *Letter of June 13th, 1543*,[1] addressed to the adherents of the Gospel in the neighborhood of Venice. To the latter, he reports that reconciliation with one party of the Sacramentarians is proving permanent, as, for example, with those of Basle, Strassburg and Ulm, as is evident from their allowing Bucer to labor with Melanchthon in the reformation then in progress at Cologne. But in Switzerland some, especially at Zurich, persist in their hostility toward the sacrament, and use profane bread and wine to the exclusion of the sacrament—"men * * * of a spirit foreign to our own, infatuated (intoxicated) men, whose contagion is to be shunned." At the same time, he relates that the party with whom the reconciliation has been effected were driven to the acknowledgment that the body is received also through the mouth of the ungodly, and argues, in support of this position, that for a spiritual reception no Lord's Supper would have been necessary, but the general ministry of the Word would have been all-sufficient. Very soon afterward, we find him complaining to his friend, Link, of the haughtiness and madness of the Swiss, by which they (Tit. iii. 11) have condemned themselves.[2] He then, in a letter to the Zurich book-dealer, Froschauer, acknowledging the receipt from the latter of a copy of Leo Judae's translation of the Bible, renounces all fellowship with the ministers of that city, inasmuch as all remonstrance with them proves in vain, and he does not wish to become a partner in their perdition, or in their vicious doctrines. They will meet the judgment which has fallen upon Zwingli, in whose steps they are following.[3] A new Latin edition

[1] Briefe, v, 564 sq. [2] Ibid., 571. [3] Ibid., 587.

of Zwingli's writings, which appeared in this year together with an apology, did not, as many supposed, arouse in the first instance the indignation of Luther against the Swiss, but must have been instrumental in furnishing further fuel to the flame. Our attention is now arrested also by the circulation of a report that Luther had himself given up his former doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and had, to quote his own expression, "become one with the Fanatics." This report arose largely from the fact that the elevation of the host, which had been previously discontinued throughout nearly the whole of Saxony, had been recently abandoned also in Wittenberg, where Luther had suffered it to remain as a protest against the violent measures of Carlstadt, and where Bugenhagen had for some time been laboring to secure the end now attained. That the incident arrested general attention, is evident also from a number of Luther's letters; and some persons, it seems, regarded it as a confession that the body of Christ is, after all, not truly present in the sacrament.[1]

Not so surprising as this report about Luther was the rumor that Melanchthon had forsaken the Lutheran doctrine. Nothing could have been more aggravating to Luther than that, following closely upon the new triumph of Sacramentarianism in Switzerland, there should be any apparent justification for such rumors of his own subjugation by it, or of his toleration of it, at least, in his most intimate associate. He refers to the matter in a letter addressed on April 21st, 1544, to the clergy of Eperies, in Hungary, and, later, in a second communication, under date of November 12th, to the religious allies at Venice.[2] He gives the solemn assurance in these letters, that, whatever reports may be circulated about him, he will never tolerate the abomination of the foes of the sacrament in the church entrusted to his care. As to Melanchthon, also, he writes to the Hungarians that he entertains no suspicions.

It is evident that Luther, up to this moment, had reposed perfect confidence in the full acceptance of his doctrine by Melanchthon and (*vid. supra*) Bucer. As to the former, we note the further significant fact, that to him Luther had originally entrusted, in 1543, the preparation of the letter to the Venetians warning them against Sacramentarianism,[3] a commission which he

[1] Cf. Erl. Ed., xxxii, 398, 420. Briefe, v, 478 (cf. ibid., 236), 504, 550, 644.

[2] Briefe, v, 644 sq., 697.

[3] Cf. the letter of the Venetians which elicited the response in question: Seckendorf, Hist. Luth., Lib. iii, § xcvii, Add. iii.

was unable to execute on account of his summons to Cologne. But even that intimate tie by which Luther had always felt himself bound to Melanchthon was now in danger of violent disruption. We have seen with what satisfaction Luther had witnessed the departure of Bucer with Melanchthon to Cologne. They had there together drawn up for the Elector of Cologne a schedule for the direction of the reformatory movement, in which the sections treating of the Lord's Supper were from the hand of Bucer. They asserted: That the Lord's Supper is the fellowship of the body and blood of Christ, in the celebration of which we are to preserve His memory, in order that we may be strengthened in (our) faith in Him and remain entirely in Him and He in us; that Christ ordains that His body be truly offered to us for the remission of sins and as a food of eternal life; that whoever firmly trusts in the words of Christ and in the visible signs eats truly and to salvation the flesh of Christ and takes into himself the whole Christ with His merit and His grace. That, even without faith, the body of the Lord is truly eaten, although not to salvation and without the reception of the whole Christ, is not asserted, though it is not, indeed, directly denied. It was the old Upper Germany mode of speaking of the sacrament—so expressed, moreover, that even the Swiss admirers of Zwingli might be satisfied with it. This document, which had been presented to the authorities of Cologne already on June 22d, 1543, was brought by the Elector of Saxony on his return from the Diet of Spires, toward the end of May, 1544, and sent by him early in June to Amsdorf, then the evangelical bishop of Naumburg, with a request for the latter's opinion of it. Luther, when writing to Amsdorf on June 23d, had not yet read it, but had in the meantime heard it highly commended, and Melanchthon had, in response to his inquiry, assured him that the proper understanding and employment of the sacrament were taught therein. But when Amsdorf—probably in July—had forwarded a cutting review of the document, Luther, as he himself writes to Chancellor Brück, aroused by Amsdorf's criticism, at once grasped the book and turned to the section treating of the sacrament. Here, he declares, the shoe pinched him hard, and in the entire discussion of the subject nothing pleased him. He found a great deal of diffuse language about the benefits of the sacrament, but only a mumbling about its substance, from which the reader of

the book could gain no clear idea, just as is usually the case in the writings of the Fanatics. Although denouncing the Anabaptists, it has no word to say against the Fanatics. It nowhere ventures to say whether the true body is present and received by the mouth. The book is, in fact, more inclined to the doctrine of the Fanatics. Moreover, as the bishop (Amsdorf) shows, there is throughout too much empty twaddle, which reveals plainly enough the agency of the chatter-box, Bucer, in its preparation. What a storm of indignation now appeared to be arising in the soul of Luther, threatening to overwhelm even Melanchthon in its fury, is revealed most plainly in letters of the latter written soon afterward; as, for example, in one under date of August 8th, in which he reports that Luther regards Amsdorf's censure too mild, and in which he already expresses the fear that he may be driven from Wittenberg.[1]

These were the days which afforded the sharpest contrast to the years immediately preceding, when Luther had desired and hoped that a state of peace, fruitful in beneficent results, might

[1] Corpus Reformator., v. 113, 461, Anm.; Briefe, v, 607, 708 sq.; Corpus Reformator., v, 459. I have dwelt at such length upon minute particulars in the above, because a number of points illustrating the course of events at this juncture have heretofore been veiled in uncertainty. That Luther's letter to Brück, which is without a date, was written at the time indicated, is clear from the connected circumstances as above recounted (contrary to the view of De Wette, Briefe, v. 709, Anm.). A letter of Melanchthon (Corp. Ref., v. 448) bearing the indefinite date, "1543," says: "Laudata est senis Coloniensis confessio ab electore duce Saxonico, a Macedone, a Luthero * * *; legimus enim fere ante mensem." Bletschneider thinks that this letter should be located in July, 1544, before Luther had been stirred up by Amsdorf's criticisms, and that the first publisher inserted the date at a venture. We must then assume that Luther had been made acquainted with the book by Melanchthon shortly after June 23d. In that case, the Reformer's first favorable opinion of it can scarcely be regarded as satisfactorily explained by the supposition that he, although then already filled with renewed suspicions of latent sacramentarianism, did not himself observe anything amiss in its contents. We may, with more probability, suppose that, while the Elector's copy was still in the hands of Amsdorf, Melanchthon may have read a portion of his manusdript to Luther. But such a partial presentation of the document to Luther from the manuscript may have been made as well in the year 1543; so that all conjecture as to the date of the letter is needless. Bretschneider very inappropriately, and almost incredibly, adduces Luther's letter to Brück in evidence of the former's satisfaction with the Cologne publication. His eye must have fallen upon the first words: "I am well pleased with the bishop's articles," etc.; and he must have supposed the reference to be to the Bishop of Cologne, instead of to Amsdorf.

be secured among all the adherents of evangelical truth—these the days in which his zeal for the pure doctrine of the sacrament threatened to produce an open breach in the very centre, and among the foremost representatives, of the German Reformation. How he was led to assume such an attitude at this time, we have endeavored to make in measure comprehensible through a careful tracing of the course of events preceding. We find the explanation of the phenomenon in the relentless hostility which he had, from the very beginning of the sacramental controversy, manifested toward all Fanaticism; in a lack of clearness as to his own views and feelings, which was unmistakably revealed in his readiness to accept the Concord; and in his mortification that the suspicions entertained by others of lurking Zwinglian sacramentarianism beneath the outward acceptance of the latter, which suspicions he had himself suppressed, should now, after all, be so fully justified—that he should himself, by his yielding disposition, have actually promoted the spread of the error—and that now, at length, his own nearest associates, instead of standing up for the full truth as he had always maintained it, were, on the contrary, openly encouraging the divergent theories. We may safely presume, also, that strict advocates of his own doctrinal system, such as Amsdorf, used all their influence to fan the flame of his indignation against those who differed with them. In addition to all this, he had just been irritated anew by the fanatical Schwenkfeld, who had assailed him in a letter and a published pamphlet, and who was now reported to have succeeded in leading astray a number of the pastors of Upper Germany.[1] It has been remarked also, not without reason, that Luther's physical condition during his closing years was not without influence upon his disposition. In the midst of his increasing bodily sufferings, the anticipation of death as near at hand, now fully justified by his condition, had become peculiarly vivid. Formerly, such anticipations had impelled him to the more earnest efforts for the restoration of harmony during his life-time; now, he dreads the thought of appearing before the judgment-seat of his Lord before he shall have given one more and final testimony against the foes of the sacrament.[2]

[1] Briefe, v, 613 sq.—Tischreden, Förstemann, i, 324. Corpus Reformator., v, 476.

[2] Cf. Erl. Ed., xxxii, 397.

With great anxiety, Melanchthon and his friends awaited a demonstration upon the part of Luther, which they supposed would involve the appearance of a new publication upon the doctrine of the sacrament, which should be a veritable "*atrox liber*." The early appearance of such a work, to be directed against the Swiss, he had himself announced in the letter to the clergy of Eperies, promising also that in it Schwenkfeld should not be overlooked. It was now noised about that he proposed, also, to pay his respects to Melanchthon and Bucer. It was further rumored, that he would no longer be satisfied with the conception of the words of institution as involving a synecdoche, and that he was preparing a new formula, subscription to which was to be demanded.[1] The Elector himself endeavored, through the medium of the Chancellor, to exert a mollifying influence upon Luther, and to persuade him merely to administer to Melanchthon privately a Christian and paternal admonition.

All these apprehensions proved, however, to be groundless. Luther's new *Kurzes Bekenntniss vom heiligen Sacrament* appeared in September of the same year, 1544.[2] It contained more severe utterances against the Swiss and their Zwingli than any of his earlier writings, but no reference whatever to Melanchthon, or even to Bucer. Melanchthon reports, on October 10th, that he had assured Luther that he had always defended the theory of a synecdoche, *i. e.*, that, when the bread and wine are taken, Christ is truly present and makes us members of Himself; and that he thinks Luther is satisfied with his position—otherwise, he must, of course, be prepared to leave Wittenberg.[3]

The publication of Luther is not so much a new exposition and defence of the true presence of the body, partaken of also by the unworthy, as, rather, simply a renewed profession of it. He describes seven spirits as having arisen to oppose it. First come Carlstadt, Zwingli, Œcolampadius and Schwenkfeld; then a fifth, substituting for the words of institution: "Take and eat that which is given to you; this is my body"; then a sixth, with the interpretation: "Take, eat, this is my body for a memorial, *i. e.*, this is a memorial of my body"; then, finally, John Cam-

[1] Corp. Ref., v, 474, 477.

[2] Ibid., 488. Cf. ibid., 484, 497. The statement of Erl. Ed., xxxii, 396, that it did not actually appear until the following year is, therefore, an error.

[3] Corp. Ref., v, 498 sq.

panus, with his explanation: "This is my body, *corpus scil. paneum*" (*i. e.*, the bread is itself a body [*Körper*] but is also Christ's body [*Leib*] because created by Him). For himself, he proposes, without consulting reason, to stand simply upon the declaration in Rom. iv. 21: "What God promises, He is also able to perform," and upon Ps. li. 4: "That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest."[1] He expressly again guards himself against the charge, which cannot be brought even against the papal doctrine, of teaching a local presence and an eating of the body piecemeal in the Lord's Supper. The whole Christian Church, he asserts, teaches that the body is present *definitively*. To the *repletive* presence he makes no allusion. More sharply than ever before, he now demands: "Believe all, plain and pure, total and entire, or believe nothing." He allows an exception only in the case of the weak, who are willing to be instructed and do not stubbornly resist. With this exception, he regards every one a heretic who denies a single article. The bell cracked at one place is utterly useless. He who keeps the whole Law and offends but in one point is, according to Jas. ii. 10, guilty of transgression against the whole Law. In the "prattle" of the Sacramentarians about spiritual eating and love, he sees only an effort to cover over the poison of their teaching. He recalls, in condemnation of Zwingli, especially the latter's *Christianae fidei expositio*, in which he admits godless heathen, such as Socrates, Numa, Scipio, etc., to heaven, asserting: Zwingli himself here became a thorough heathen. The Fanatics in general, and especially their masters ("May the Lord deliver the poor people from the destroyers of souls"), he condemns in the following terms: "No Christian can, or should, pray for them, nor have any sympathy for them. They have been given over (to destruction) and sin unto death; * * * they have been warned often enough; if any will not stay, let them go."

The anticipated attack upon Melanchthon was thus not realized, nor was it ever afterwards made. On the contrary, Luther soon afterwards sends to the Venetians an assurance concerning Melanchthon similar to that which he had before the alienation forwarded to the clergy of Eperies. In the *Letter of November*

[1] Cf. the simple appeal to the divine omnipotence; also, e. g., in Erl. Ed., xix., 116, 119.

12th already mentioned, he warns them that, in case it should come to their ears that the latter or he himself had joined in the mad folly of the Sacramentarians, they should for God's sake not believe it. That Melanchthon was not willing to assent entirely to his own statements upon the doctrine of the sacrament—that, with all his acknowledgment of a true presence, the latter yet shrunk from the confession of a bodily participation upon the part of the ungodly—was not overlooked by Luther any more than by those friends who were still making every effort to incite him to open hostility against his associate. He had, in fact, as early as 1537 openly expressed to Chancellor Brück his suspicion as to Melanchthon's attitude toward this doctrine.[1] If he, notwithstanding this, now again smothers his rising indignation, and, even after the above-cited open declarations of Melanchthon himself, again bears such testimony in his behalf, we cannot but see in this a positive evidence that he discriminated here, as before, between Zwinglianism and a view of the Lord's Supper, not entirely accordant with his own, but yet clinging to the acknowledgment of a true dispensing of Christ to the communicant, and that he did not regard the aberration of the latter as a sufficient ground for separation and dissension. Nor does the testimonial in the letter to the Venetians stand alone. With honest appreciation, clouded by no shadow of suspicion, he speaks, in the *Preface to the First Volume of his Latin Works*, written March 5th, 1545, of the activity of the associate whom God had given him,[2] lauding especially the *Loci* of the latter as an excellent guide to the doctrine of piety. The *Loci* had, in the new revision of 1543–4, rejected, indeed, the "profane notions" of the sacrament as a mere memorial meal for a deceased person, and declared that Christ is truly present, giving His body to those who ate, and that He, as Cyril (in his *Commentary upon the Gospel of John*) says, is present in us by a natural participation, *i. e.*, not only in efficacy, but also in substance; but they, too, had said nothing of a participation by the unbelieving, and they had directed the thought at once upon the inward reception of the whole Christ, which occurs only in the case of true believers, and of which Christ speaks in John vi.

[1] Corp. Ref., iii, 427 Gieseler, Kirchengeschichte, III. ii, 201 sq.

[2] Op., Jena, I.

Finally, we find Melanchthon, in the year 1544, entrusted with the preparation of a new document, to be presented to the Emperor in the name of the German Evangelical Churches—the so-called "Wittenberg Reformation." This, when speaking of the proper understanding of the sacrament, which is necessary for communicants, says merely, that it is a partaking of the true body and blood, and that this partaking is to strengthen faith, because Christ here gives to us His body, that He may make us certainly members of Himself and forgive our sins for the sake of His death, etc.[1] Here we have again the idea of an aiming at unification with Christ, which Melanchthon thus holds in common with the conception embodied in the *Tetrapolitana*.[2] Yet Luther also signed this document without hesitancy in January, 1545.

The apprehensions of Luther in regard to Bucer were also soon allayed. In 1545 he defends him, with earnest feeling and in language highly laudatory, against Cochlaeus. He speaks of him also in the second letter to the Venetians, in which he warns the latter not to allow themselves to be led astray by the Zurichers, Bullinger and Pellican, nor even by Bucer. As to the latter, however, he explains, he has in view, when thus speaking, only certain of his earlier writings, which he himself has not seen; and then adds, further, that he is fully persuaded that Bucer was long since won to the side of the truth, and that he does not, even in view of the more recent course of the latter, see any need for now warning against him.

Under these circumstances, there is no internal improbability in the report, that he greeted with rejoicing the tract upon the Lord's Supper which Calvin had meanwhile published, although it is open to question in how far Pezel's account of this incident is trustworthy.[3] We refer the reader to the statement above made with reference to Calvin's relation to the doctrinal system of Upper Germany and Luther's relation to the *Swabian Syngramma*. Although Luther did not find in this publication the full and entire truth as he conceived it, he yet found vigorous expression given to the ideas which the theologians of Upper Germany and Melanchthon held in common with himself and in

[1] Corp. Reform., v, 588, 618.

[2] Cf. on the other hand, Melanchthon's earlier representation of the matter in his Instruction for Inspectors, vid. supra, p. 149, note.

[3] Gieseler, III. ii, 171, does not challenge its reliability.

opposition to Zwinglianism. It is noticeable that Calvin, in teaching a true participation in the substance of the body of Christ, coincides also with Luther's pamphlet against Zwingli in the employment of a special analogy, appealing, in illustration of the impartation of Christ through the signs of bread and wine, to the appearance of the invisibly present Holy Spirit under the form of the dove at the baptism of Christ (without, indeed, thinking of *such* a union of the sign and the invisible object signified as Luther maintained). If it be true that Luther declared that, had Zwingli and Œcolampadius at once spoken as did Calvin now, he would never have been led into such extended disputation with them, we must take it for granted that, in such a case, he would have still noted the difference between their views and his own, but that the opposition would not have become so violent.[1]

Let us, at this point, take a glance at Luther's later relations with the *Bohemian Brethren*, by whom he had first been led to enter the lists publicly in defence of the doctrine of the bodily presence in the Lord's Supper. Under the leadership of new Seniors, who had been in office since 1532, they had renewed their correspondence with Luther, and the latter wrote prefaces for a new confession published by them in 1533 and one revised in 1538. In the first of these prefaces, he announces that, although he had first been somewhat suspicious of them on account of certain of their expressions in regard to the sacrament, yet, after extended conference with them, he finds that they also teach a reception of the true body. Even now, he acknowledges, he cannot altogether adopt their mode of expressing themselves, but neither will he attempt to compel them to adopt his own, but will wait until God shall lead to a fuller understanding. We ought not, he adds, to quarrel about words, but every one should speak the truth plainly as he understands it. Two years later, all doubts of any significance which he had still entertained against their doctrinal position were entirely dissipated by the declarations of new delegates. He then testifies: "I do not see that we differ at all upon the subject itself, nor in our way of thinking (*in re seu sententia*); only we use different words." He accordingly omits all references to

[1] We can upon this point only express our agreement with J. Müller, "Die evangel. Union, etc.," p. 326.

the matter in his second preface.[1] Yet, in this new public exhibition of their faith, the peculiarity of the doctrinal statements of the Bohemians was consistently, and in a form which cannot have escaped the notice of Luther, still maintained. They teach, indeed, a presence upon earth of the whole God-man who has been exalted to heaven, a special presence in the hearts of believers, and, finally, a presence of a peculiar, "sacramental" kind in the Lord's Supper. But it is still always only a "spiritual mode of existence," or presence, whilst in regard to the presence of Christ in heaven they accept "the corporeal or personal mode of existence." They know no other sacramental reception than that implied in the confession, that in the holy external transaction instituted by Christ, He Himself is brought, with all His resources (benefits), into the spirit of the believer. This may be said also, they hold, in regard to baptism as well.[2]

That Luther should have demanded no more from the Bohemian Brethren is, especially in view of the kind treatment which he had accorded them at an earlier period, perfectly intelligible at a time when the prospects seemed so bright for securing a general concord among Protestants. But we find, on the other hand, as early as the year 1541, before the Reformer had been drawn into a position of renewed hostility against the Swiss (although his aversion to all sacramentarianism had then, indeed, been already enkindled anew by Bullinger's defence of Zwingli), a new expression of dissatisfaction with the Waldenses, *i. e.*, the Bohemians, or Moravians. He, at that time, instructs George Major to write to the pastor "in Valle," who must have stood in intimate association and intercourse with these "Waldenses,"[3] that he cannot believe that they are in earnest in appealing to him in support of their denial of the real presence of Christ in the sacrament; that they should not forget how long he had argued with them over their, to him, suspicious statement, that the body of Christ is sacramentally in the bread, until they had,

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 319 sqq. Seidemann, Lutherbriefe, p. 42. Walch, Luther's Schriften, xiv, 345 sqq.

[2] Cf. also especially the extended explanations of the "Apology" (Lydius, Waldensia, sect. ii, pp. 92 sqq.), which they sent with their confession to Wittenberg in 1538. According to Lasicius, Lib. v, sec. 82, the documents sent were there examinad by Jonas, Bugenhagen, Cruciger and Melanchthon.

[3] Briefe, v, 349.

at length, plainly and publicly confessed that the body is *truly* present sacramentally, *i. e.*, invisibly and for our use, and, moreover, that it is the true body itself; that, if it should now prove that they had deceived him with treacherous words, he would publicly denounce them as graceless liars and hypocrites, and free his name from all complicity with the error which they now seek to attribute to him. In the attitude which he here assumes toward the Bohemians, we have an instructive prelude to the similar, but more decided, breach which so soon afterward occurred between himself and the Swiss. But in this case the alienation seems to have proceeded no farther. No trace of it can be detected in the historical records of the Brethren.[1] In the year following, although the Brethren had not in the interval placed any different interpretation upon the language of their confession, *i. e.*, had not employed it in any greater conformity to the doctrinal conceptions of Luther, he nevertheless continued the most friendly intercourse with their leaders. After having again, in 1542, enjoyed a visit from their Senior, John Augusta, he writes to the latter: "I admonish you in the Lord to continue to the end in communion of spirit and doctrine with us as you have begun." He had said to Augusta personally, as the Bohemians report: "Do you be the apostles of your Slavonic race, and I, with my associates, will be those of my German race."[2] When afterwards, in his *Kurzes Bekenntniss vom Abendmahl*, recounting the various forms of the sacramentarian spirit and his conflict with the latter, he would have had abundant opportunity to include the Bohemian Brethren, if he regarded them at all in the same light. But he never mentions them at all in such connection.

The case was entirely different, however, with the opinion entertained of the Swiss by Luther until the day of his death. The reply of the Zurich clergy, in 1545, to his *Leeren Verläumdungen, Lästerungen*, etc., in which, despite Calvin's earnest protest, they ignored all considerations of respect for the character and services of the great Reformer, could but confirm him in the conviction that all further attempts at reconciliation upon his part would be in vain. He maintained, therefore, toward them the

[1] Cf. in Lasicius. Even Gindely, who regards with no favor the friendly attitude of Luther toward the Bohemians, makes no mention of it.

[2] Briefe, v, 500. Cf. vi, 466, Anm. Lasicius, Lib. v, § 99. Comenius, Historia fratrum, Halae 1702, p. 26.

attitude assumed in his *Kurzes Bekenntniss*. Further expressions occurring in his writings leave no possibility that he can have entertained, at any moment in the closing years of his life, any milder sentiments in regard to them. Upon reading their reply above alluded to, he declared that he would make only the briefest possible response to the incorrigible, haughty Fanatics. Meanwhile, he reiterated his opinion of them in his theses, *Wider die 32 Artikel der Theologisten zu Löwen, 1545*, as follows: "We earnestly declare, that the Zwinglians, and all revilers of the sacrament, who deny that * * * the true and natural body and blood of Christ are *orally* received, are assuredly heretics and severed from the Holy Church." For himself, he confesses that, "In the sacrament of the altar, which should be *adored* with all reverence, the natural body is dispensed and received * * * both by the worthy and by the unworthy." It was still, at that time, his purpose to prepare a paper specifically against the Zwinglians. So late as January 17th, 1546, emaciated and longing for the repose of the heavenly world, he expresses his gratification that the Swiss should be so incensed against him, and should denounce him as a miserable man, excluded from the favor of God. Thus he has, he declares, at last attained what he had desired, *i. e.*, that they should themselves acknowledge that they are his enemies. He, the "most miserable of men," is well content, on the other hand, with the benediction of the Psalm: "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the Sacramentarians, nor standeth in the way of the Zwinglians, nor sitteth in the seat of the Zurichers." Upon the same day, he once more, in the last sermon which he ever delivered at Wittenberg, declaimed warmly against the accursed harlot, Reason, upon which those fanatical spirits, the Sacramentarians, depend, when they inquire how God can give His body in the bread. We should listen to the Son of God, who declares: "This is my body," and trample reason under our feet. But these (Fanatics) are so shrewd, that no one can get the better of them (show what fools they are). If one should have them in a mortar and grind them with the pestle, he couldn't crush the folly out of them.[1] Six days after the delivery of this sermon, the great Reformer started upon his

[1] Briefe, vii, 728, 740, 743. Erl. Ed., lxv, 171 sq. Briefe, v, 759, 778. Erl. Ed., xvi, 144 sqq.

journey to Eisleben, where, on February 18th, he closed his eyes in death.[1]

We have now reviewed the historical process through which the theological views and teaching of Luther, although these were already, in all their fundamental elements, firmly established when he, under their guidance, stepped boldly out of the Church which lay still steeped in error, were yet, in important respects and in significant particulars, further developed, assuming a more definite character and finding expression in clearer formulæ. This was the case in the relation which his views sustained to the Roman Catholic form of Christianity, and peculiarly so in their relation to the opposition encountered from the newly-arisen Fanaticism.

In this course of development we have seen that, along with the doctrines which were brought into most prominent discussion because of the advocacy of contrary views, the doctrine of the Person of Christ bore an especially important part. As now this latter doctrine was drawn into the discussion as a premise, or basis, for the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the latter being the

[1] It has been said, as is well known, that Luther, before starting upon his last journey to Eisenach, confessed to Melanchthon that he had gone too far in his zeal against the Sacramentarians. This can no longer be dismissed as a bare rumor or invention, since an autograph report of the affair, given by Hardenberg, has been published (in the Reform. Kirchenzeitung, 1853, No. 40). According to this, Hardenberg testified under oath in 1556, that he had heard from the lips of Melanchthon that Luther, before undertaking the journey, had said that he must confess that far too much had been done in the matter of the Sacrament; that he had himself often thought of mollifying the matter by means of a special publication, in order that the Church might again become harmonious; that, as affairs then stood, the whole doctrine would come to be regarded with suspicion; that he commended the matter to God; and that Melanchthon and the rest might be able to accomplish something in this direction after his death. According to this, his temper was yet once more remarkably changed as he reflected upon his approaching death. Nor dare we assert the impossibility of such a change. Nevertheless, I do not venture to place by the side of the above-cited recorded expression of Luther a merely verbal report of such far different tone, which may easily, in the course of the intervening years, have at least lost much in accuracy while treasured only in the recollection of Hardenberg, or indeed, in that of Melanchthon himself. Cf. also the opinion of Planck (Geschichte des prot. Lehrbegriffs, iv, 27), which certainly is not warped by prejudice, upon the internal credibility of the report.

immediate subject of controversy, it necessarily followed that the emphasis which Luther, in contrast with the position of his antagonists and finding occasion in that very position, laid upon those aspects and points of doctrine which he was compelled to maintain against their assaults, must in turn react upon his conception of other phases of scriptural truth. The emphasis which is placed, in opposition to the theories of Fanaticism, upon the objective means of grace, and, still more, that accorded to an established ecclesiastical order as in accordance with the will of God, could not but exercise a decided influence upon his conception of the Church in general. We shall also find this same characteristic feature of the Reformer's teaching producing a positive effect upon his conception of the relation of the devout human consciousness to the gracious divine decree, in so far as God, in the fulfilment of the latter, directs us to these means of His grace.

There is, however, no other single doctrine which comes into such prominence in the historical development of the Reformer's views as those which we have been examining—none which became so specifically a subject of formal negotiations, or was so specifically and deliberately carried out to increased accuracy of statement by Luther himself. Even those upon which we have had occasion to comment were, after all, but a further refinement of the principles before asserted, inclining in certain definite directions. The modifications which are observable in other leading articles of faith are manifestly but relative, referring not to the chief contents of the doctrines themselves, but only to the measure in which one or another is proportionally emphasized and applied; and this proportionate emphasis, again, might vary according to the circumstances under which Luther was, from time to time, called upon to express his views. This was especially true in regard to the doctrine concerning the Church. The leading elements of this doctrine were already permanently fixed in the period with which our present book opens, *i. e.*, on the one hand, the spiritual communion of believers in Christ, living in the world and yet not belonging to it; on the other hand, the outward signs and means of grace. We have already indicated the influence of the further historical development upon these fundamental principles. To these particulars must be yet added, especially, the significance attached to the divinely-ordained secular authorities and national ordinances and forces in

the maintenance and defence of Christendom and the Church. Luther's appeal to the nobility and princes of the realm in his *Address to the Nobility* is sufficient evidence that he at that time had decided views upon this point.

We may, therefore, refrain from a further historical exhibition of separate opinions and declarations of Luther, which we could not, in any event, place in their proper light except in the systematic presentation of his entire doctrinal system. We will, on the other hand, in the course of our general review, return to note occasionally what may call for further remark as bearing upon the historical development of Luther.

We have taken occasion, also, when discussing the leading doctrines which have claimed our attention, to refer from time to time in advance to many of the items which it will be our task to present at length in the remaining Book. On the other hand, it must have been evident to the reader, from the whole course of the preceding discussion, that certain harmonious principles held sway in the mind of Luther from the very beginning, by which fact we are assured in advance of the possibility of arranging his views and teachings in thorough-going inner harmony.

BOOK IV.

THE DOCTRINAL VIEWS OF LUTHER PRESENTED IN SYSTEMATIC ORDER.

INTRODUCTORY.

A. General Character of Luther's Teaching.

We have now traced up to the close of our Reformer's life the course of historical development by which the grand outlines of his theology gradually attained their definite and abiding form. There yet remains for us the task of presenting a summary of the latter as a finally completed and inwardly consistent whole. In attempting to conduct such a review, we shall find it necessary to take our position in the closing period of Luther's life. Up to this point of time, we have occasion to observe certain modifications in his treatment of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, as manifested, particularly, in the argument in its support (in which we find him no longer appealing to the "repletive presence" of the body of Christ) and in the opinion which he entertained of its opponents, so clearly revealed in his renewed condemnation of the Swiss as Zwinglians, despite their recent acceptance of propositions in greater harmony with his own views. We find also, within the last decade of his life, a fuller exposition of the doctrine of the Law than at any earlier period. Yet these modifications do not involve any profound or essential changes in his doctrinal position. For actual advances of this character we must look to the time of the controversy with Zwingli. And for the unfolding of his theology in general, in the form which it permanently retained, we must go back still farther, *i. e.*, to the time when, himself in the full tide of his reformatory activity, he was first confronted by the spirit of fanaticism, and promptly cast himself with all his power and skill into the field against it. He himself refers, in 1528,[1] for a statement of the views which he had up to that time advanced, to his publications of the preceding four or five years. We must, therefore, combine with the writings of the years thus indicated those of the Reformer's later life as

[1] In the "Grosses Bekenntniss vom Abendmahl," Erl. Ed., xxx, 372.

the products of essentially one chief period. They will all furnish us material aid in the execution of our present purpose.

Yet, so far as the central point of Luther's theology is concerned, its general fundamental principles, and the great majority of its separate doctrinal conceptions, even these epoch-making years, as we must have long since observed, by no means recorded any such a revolution as to exempt us from the necessity of still keeping in view the writings of the preceding period, beginning with A. D. 1517, and, still further, those of yet earlier date. For such important doctrines, indeed, as those of the Work of Christ, of Justification, and of the Nature of the Church, the last great period furnishes very little, if any, new material. It was only because the leading points in the revolutionized conception of these doctrines, as presented by Luther, had already claimed our attention, that we were enabled in Book III. to refrain from further examination of the materials illustrative of these points furnished by the period then under review, and that, even in our study of the still earlier period, we were able to refer for a fuller exposition of these doctrines to this closing Book, in which we shall be at liberty to cite at once from both the earlier and the later writings of the Reformer. Any historical distinctions observable in the treatment of particular phases of these leading doctrines must now be duly noted.

Although the theology of Luther was, from the very first, distinguished by the clearness and certainty of its fundamental principle and by the inner unity and the harmonious connection of its constituent elements, and although it is thus peculiarly susceptible of systematic presentation, yet the idea should never for a moment be entertained that he himself ever sought to cast it into the form of a peculiar scientific system. In not a single one of his writings has he discussed with equal fulness, or thoroughness, all the leading doctrines of Christianity. This is not done even where it was his express purpose to summarize the entire contents of the evangelical faith, as, *e. g.*, in confessions,[1] in discussions of the chief articles of Christian faith embodied in the Apostles' Creed, and in the Larger and Smaller Catechisms. Even in such writings as these, a very marked prominence is given to those points

[1] Cf., e. g., Erl. Ed., xxx. 363 sqq., where he proposes to confess his faith "article by article." Yet even to this confession may be applied what has been above said of the Work of Christ.

of doctrine in defence of which against the assaults of ancient or modern errorists a particularly definite and vigorous confession appeared to be required. We there find, for example, the most positive assertions of the principle, that salvation is to be attained only in Christ, and upon the ground of His work of atonement and of the unity of the two natures in the person of Christ; but we find, on the other hand, no closer analysis of the Work of Christ, although other writings of Luther, and particularly those of a practical character, abundantly testify, not only what great importance he attached to the latter doctrine, but how richly and vividly also it had been developed in his own mind.

But how fully, it may be further asked, does the form in which Christian truth stood revealed to his thought and found expression in his writings establish a claim to acknowledgment as a peculiar scientific system? In reply, we do not hesitate to affirm, that evangelical truth is here presented as a brilliant and harmonious whole, marked by a full and fine discrimination even in its concrete form. Every separate feature is moulded in conformity with the supreme, ruling ideas, and is, and remains, thoroughly permeated by them. The speculative talent which formed part of the native endowment of Luther, and which is displayed, for example, in the striking originality of the *Christmas Sermon of A. D. 1515*, with its affinity for both Mysticism and the system of Aristotle, is ever afterwards clearly discernible in his writings. We shall have occasion to observe how deeply, inspired by a believing apprehension of the divine proffer of salvation, he penetrates into the very nature and heart of God; and then, again, how, in the doctrine of the revelations and presentations of this God, everything is derived from, and interpenetrated by, the comprehensive fundamental ideas. In these respects, Luther manifests an endowment which was lacking, for example, in Melanchthon. But this, in itself, by no means furnishes all that is required for a logically consistent and satisfactory exhibition of the truth. That which might still be lacking, despite the possession of such high spiritual endowment, and which is actually, in part, conspicuously lacking in the case of Luther, may find illustration, for example, in his treatment of the doctrine of the atonement. In his presentation of this central truth we shall find a full confirmation of what has been said as to the scope, the loftiness, and the profundity of his conceptions: but if we attempt a logical analysis of the separate

ideas involved, and seek to set each by itself, bounded by precise and unvarying limitations, there will remain for us many open questions. Then, again, our inquiries will often remain unsatisfied if we—as notably, for example, in the doctrine concerning the person of Christ—look to his writings to find the relation between two phases of a given truth which are to be reconciled to one another clearly and accurately defined in their points of mutual contact. Perfectly correct principles may inspire utterances which are seemingly of directly opposite tendency, and a profound general intuition may underlie the whole; and yet it may appear impossible to demonstrate that the two phases of the subject, as separately defined, are not mutually destructive, but capable of reconciliation—that, consequently, the principles and fundamental conceptions in question, true in themselves, have really been separately expressed in terms strictly accurate. Another instance in which the suspicion that conceptions directly contrary to one another have been embraced is inevitably aroused is found in Luther's doctrine of the absolute decrees of the divine omnipotence, upon the one hand, and the fundamentally ethical nature of God upon the other. The question here arises, whether the strictly evangelical principle, which moulds and controls the general view of Luther, has actually penetrated all his thought and brought his ideas on this subject into real harmony with itself. In all these cases, the question is forced upon us, in what peculiar general characteristic of Luther's cast of thought and method of doctrinal expression we are to find the explanation of the fact, that he did not more concern himself in the harmonious combination, analysis, limitation and uniform presentation of the various elements of the truths which he so zealously proclaimed. The problem is solved, when we remember that the grandeur, sublimity and wealth of his theological apprehension and teaching rest essentially upon an immediate and large perception, intuition and comprehension of the truth, which casts comparatively far into the background that disposition and capacity of the intelligence which aims at a thorough elaboration of the various separate items and phases of a subject, at the formulation of conceptions, and at logical or dialectical systematization. At the same time, it is to be borne in mind that the original impulse is, with Luther, never a strictly scientific one, but always practical and religious, bent upon presenting the truth,

which he apprehends in his own life as *saving* truth, to the minds of others also as standing, in its entire scope, in most intimate relation to life and salvation. It is to be observed, also, that Luther cherishes the firm conviction that this truth can be discovered only in an objectively given Word of Life, namely, that of the Sacred Scriptures, and can be drawn only from that source. These considerations make it very evident why he does not give himself more concern about the deficiency of his theological publications in the particulars just noted. They enable us, also, to add a limitation to what has been said in regard to the speculative tendency of his mind. Vigorously as he rises to the apprehension of the loftiest ideas and principles, and thoroughly as his theology is penetrated by them, he yet sternly discourages every attempt to pass beyond the truth designed to lead to salvation and life to the discussion of further questions touching the Supreme Being, or to gain a knowledge of such truth from any other source than the inspired Word of Life.

This peculiarity remained, also, an unvarying trait in the doctrinal method of the Reformer. We find him, indeed, at a later period, employing in his Christology scholastic categories in the construction of his theory of the *communicatio idiomatum*, although nothing of this kind had before appeared in his teachings ; but we have already seen that, even in the formulation of this doctrine, the impelling motive was the practical and religious, the striving after assurance of salvation ; and, moreover, we do not even here find any dialectical exhibition of the relation between the leading phases and elements of the doctrine. The doctrine of the atonement retains its peculiar original form. In the doctrine of predestination, that phase of his theorizing which first arrested our attention was at a later period carried much farther into the background by the force of the specifically evangelical principle which dominated him. Yet we can detect no effort to harmonize more fully the two phases of his teaching upon this subject, but only the oft-repeated exhortation, to refrain from worrying over that, to us, inscrutable feature of the truth.

After what has been said, it can be no matter of surprise to us that not all the doctrines which *we* are accustomed to include in a summary of the articles of Christian faith receive uniform attention and emphasis in the writings of Luther. Thus, he has, in the undivided attention bestowed upon matters of specifically

Christian faith and life, only incidentally touched upon the doctrine of the general revelations of God. He never, for example, entered at any length upon the dogmatic problems connected with the subject of Creation, but here also turned the attention of his readers at once away from all speculations, and fixed it upon the practical significance of the doctrine. How little importance he attached to systematic scientific analysis is illustrated, for example, in the absence of any attempt to classify the separate divine attributes, although the peculiar light in which he was accustomed to represent the chief of these attributes was of the very highest significance for his entire theology.

Luther's doctrine is thus a testimony coming fresh from the life, and designed to influence life, in a way in which this can scarcely be said of the theology of any other teacher since the time of the apostles. Although constantly moving amidst the most exalted conceptions, it is never concerned with bare ideas, scholastic categories, abstractions, or even words, but always with facts and with the highest realities themselves; and these appear, without any effort upon his part, to fall of themselves into their places with inner harmony. At a time when the theology of Luther found but slight appreciation, Herder fittingly acknowledged, in agreement with our own judgment, the *Dogmatics* of the Reformer in the following language: "It might be proved that, in the sense of the mere buffoons and word-architects [that is, if we were willing to take the word 'dogmaticians' in this sense], he knew nothing of such word-building. Even in his last confessions, in which it has been customary to see only the headstrong dogmatician, the man took everything *so largely and heartily*, without speculation or mere stringing together! Who could ever see in him the champion of syllables, or the ventilator of abstractions? The whole man, ever *feeling the Word of God*, whose speech is always of the Word of God and the state of the Church, who *feels* all things as *great serious facts*, and contends for them—this is the man who stands before us."[1]

It may be said, on the other hand, that the gold which Luther offers us has, in great part, not been so fully reduced by him to the form of current coin as our requirements may demand. But

[1] Sämmtliche Werke, 1830, under Theol. und Relig. xv. 242 (in the Provincial-blättern, which, as J. T. Beck has recently lamented, have been "so outrageously forgotten").

it is just in this shape that it possesses for us a peculiar value. Many a particle of the noble metal may have been lost, or have suffered damage, at the hands of the later writers who have cut it up and stamped it into their own forms. But, at all events, we must now, in our historical examination, be on our guard lest we endeavor to draw or force out of Luther's own presentations of doctrine that which an unprejudiced historical scrutiny may find still lacking in the directions above indicated.

The question may perhaps be raised in the minds of some, whether, in employing the writings of Luther as the source from which to derive materials for an exhibition of his theology, we are at liberty to cite with equal freedom from the various classes of his writings, *i. e.*, the strictly dogmatical, the exegetical, the practical and homiletical; and, indeed, whether we have not already frequently erred in this respect. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that discussions of such strictly dogmatic character as commonly marks theses drawn by the hand of Luther are not to be looked for in *any* class of the Reformer's writings. It would be a serious fault to overlook the fact that, on the contrary, even in the midst of practical sermons, the most important points of doctrine receive as thorough and keen analysis as in writings of any other character whatsoever. We need only inquire, in each instance, whether in the passages which we desire to employ—whether taken from controversial dogmatic writings, from sermons, or from commentaries upon the Bible—Luther was really endeavoring to elucidate precisely the point of which we may at the time be treating. Thus, for example, we have above derived the most important deliverances upon the subject of infant baptism from the midst of a sermon. Thus, also, the *Latin Commentary of Luther upon Genesis* is a chief source for the derivation of his entire theology, although, as compared with the contents of his earlier writings, it offers nothing new. The *Tischreden*, however, we always employ only incidentally; not because Luther may not, even when at table, have given expressions of his views which would be of great significance to us, but because there is always room to doubt how faithfully such utterances have been recorded. We remark, however, that in the published collections of these "table talks" are included not only utterances actually made under such circumstances. We find here also, for example, one of the most important written

sources, based on the teaching of Luther himself, for his doctrine of justification.[1]

B. Range of Topics and their Original Mutual Relations.

The cardinal point of Lutheran teaching and theology is that about which we have seen not only the thoughts and opinions of Luther, but his entire inner life as well, revolving. It is the *great contrast between sin and grace;* or, more accurately expressed, grace itself, *i. e., the grace of God in Christ*, in which faith is to find deliverance from sin, guilt and hell, paternal adoption by God, and eternal life. The profoundest aim in Luther's religious life and in his theology is that he may secure a personal assurance of this grace as reliable as is the fact that it is offered. If we recall, for illustration, the conception of Law and Gospel as exhibited in his writings, we are struck with the fact, that in the contrast between these two he really sees precisely this contrast between sin and grace. In the state of sin, God stands before us as the Lawgiver, who makes demands upon us, and before whose bar of justice we are condemned; but when He permits us to hear the Gospel message and experience its power in our hearts, the day of grace has dawned for us. Out of the agony, the terrors, the "sweating-bath," of the Law, Luther struggled up to soul-satisfying faith in this message of grace; but he frequently testifies that he had still continually to struggle afresh against the tortures of his earlier experience, which constitute the fearful temptations so often referred to in his letters. Thus the profoundest longing of his inmost soul remained ever fixed upon the grace, or reconciliation with God, once realized.

The attempt has sometimes been made to differentiate the Reformed and Lutheran types of piety by asserting that the former aims chiefly to magnify the *Glory of God*, which man is bound to conserve, and the latter, the *Reconciliation* of which he may be assured. But Luther seeks also to set the glory of God above everything else. He condemns the notion of any merit upon the part of man, and all human righteousness, upon the ground that it robs God of the glory which is His due. He repeats with approval a remark of Staupitz in which the latter rejoices to testify that the evangelical doctrine gives God alone the glory. It

[1] Tischr., Först., ii, 146 sqq. Erl. Ed., lviii, 347 sqq.

is zeal for the glory of God that makes him so eager to have the abominations of the mass and all the connected abuses abolished. Everything in the Christian world should, according to his view, be so ordered, that power and glory may be attributed to God alone. That we should seek first of all the glory of God, he finds taught in the Lord's Prayer. But we find a feature especially characteristic of Luther in the profound harmony in which, with him, this insistence upon the glory of God ever stands with a similar insistence upon the direct apprehension of divine grace. For in what way does he conceive that God is to be chiefly glorified? The Father, he maintains, is to be glorified in the Son; and this is "nothing else than that the Father be held to be a *gracious and merciful* Father, who does not cherish anger against us, but who forgives sins and bestows all His grace upon us for the sake of His Son. *This is the true glory, by which God is glorified.*" In the recognition of this fact, that God is thus glorified in the Son, our Saviour, consists for him the new wisdom of believers. This idea will meet us again when we come to consider his doctrine concerning God. We find, accordingly, in the system of Luther, a due recognition at once of the soul's longing for salvation and of the glory which belongs to God.[1]

Luther expresses concisely the difference between *Law* and *Gospel* as follows: The two are related to one another as taking and giving, as demanding and bestowing. He himself always makes these two principles the basis of his classification of the things which it is necessary for a Christian to know: first, the knowledge of the Law and, with it, of one's own sin and liability to punishment; secondly, the knowledge of Christ, who frees the believer from sin—first, the knowledge of one's sickness; and then, the remedy.[2] The highest art in Christian life he considered to lie in the proper discrimination between these two principles; and he could boast that for this the world was indebted to the revived doctrine of the Reformation. Neither the Pope nor all his learned men and universities, he declared, had ever known anything of this art; and, in fact, outside of the Scriptures, no book had ever before been written in which these two diverse subjects had been handled with proper discrimination. Whoso-

[1] Comm. ad Gal., i, 203. Erl. Ed., viii, 304; xlv, 211; xlix, 130; xlvi, 40.

[2] Erl. Ed., xii, 2; xiv, 13 sq; xxii, 4; xxviii, 252 sq; xxix, 139 sq. (vid. supra, p. 30); xxi, 94.

ever now understands the art of discriminating between them should thank God and may account himself a theologian.[1]

The second chief article of Christian doctrine, *i. e.*, that concerning the Gospel and the grace and forgiveness therein offered, is followed, in Luther's conception, by the doctrine setting forth how the accepted believer must continually crucify the old man, exercise love, make proof of his profession with patience, etc.[2]

The doctrine of sin and grace, with which the first two chief articles are concerned, he combines in one conception as a matter for faith, and from it he distinguishes love, as the substance of the third article. We may embrace the entire content of the Christian intelligence in two parts, as in two bags. The bag of faith has two pockets, in one of which is contained our belief that we have all been ruined by the sin of Adam, and in the other, that we are all redeemed by Christ. The bag of love has also two pockets, in one of which is contained the admonition that we should do good to all men as Christ has done to us, and in the other, the exhortation to willingly endure all manner of evil.[3]

With these three chief articles of faith he connects the three principal parts of the Catechism as follows: The Decalogue corresponding to the first article—that concerning the Law and sin; the Creed, to the second; while in the Lord's Prayer, finally, we are taught to call upon God to grant to us, and preserve and increase in us, faith and the fulfilling of the Law (which is an outgrowth of faith and the state of grace) and to remove all that hinders such development of the Christian life.[4]

These are, then, the chief articles of faith which Luther endeavored to enforce in his teaching. The second of them demands a more careful examination, not only standing midway in the natural order, but occupying also by virtue of its contents the central position.

The *grace*, whose proffer by God and acceptance upon the part of man are presented in the second article, is, upon Luther's theory, to be conceived as above all a *sin-pardoning* grace. It was the burden of guilt by which he had been most sorely oppressed until relief came to him in the announcement of the

[1] Erl. Ed., xix, 235; x, 86. Comm. ad Gal., i, 172, 174.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 30. Erl. Ed., xxviii, 252 sq.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxii, 233. [4] Ibid., xxi, 107; cf. also xxii, 4.

forgiveness of sins. Thus, he found a summary of the whole Gospel expressed in the words of the Lord's Supper which describe the body of Christ as given *for us, for the remission of sins*. Where there is remission of sins, there is also, for him, life and salvation. He defines redemption itself as simply the remission of sins (cf. Eph. i. 7).[1] But this forgiveness is a free gift of God through Christ. It is to be, and can be, attained only in a receptive faith, which is itself a work of God. It is here, therefore, that we find the true central point and inmost nature of Christianity. The forgiveness of sins, says Luther, presents us in two words the entire conception of the kingdom of Christ. The doctrine of this grace of God is "also the only part, or article, by means of which we become and are called Christians, and which separates us from all other saints on earth" (*i. e.*, such as seek to possess any other holiness before God). "This alone makes one a Christian, namely, that he comprehends this article in faith and knows that he is living in the kingdom of grace, wherein Christ has taken him under His wings and continually bestows upon him the forgiveness of sins."[2]

We but say the same thing in other words when we, with Luther, represent the principal article to be that concerning *righteousness*, or *justification by grace through faith;* for the remission of sins and the justification here referred to are interchangeable conceptions. This is manifest from all the utterances of Luther concerning the way of salvation which have fallen under our notice, and will constantly appear in the discussion yet before us. The believer becomes righteous when God, through the remission of his guilt for Christ's sake, accepts him as righteous. The righteousness of the Christian embraces more than this, but this is the fundamental thing upon which all else depends. Thus, for example, we find Luther, in a passage already cited, designating as the true, heavenly righteousness, or the piety acceptable to God, that which is called the grace of God, or the forgiveness of sins. The principal article, accordingly, consists in this, that our heart must place its confidence alone in Christ, that is, that we must become free from sin and *righteous* alone *through faith*, according to Rom. x. 10. "Where this article is gone, the Church is gone." In commenting upon

[1] Erl. Ed., xxi, 20; ix, 380. [2] Ibid., xiv, 167, 179 sq.

Psalm cxxx., Luther remarks: "This treats of the principal article of our salvation, namely, *justification*, the simple knowledge of which alone preserves the Church; for it is the knowledge of the truth and of life: on the contrary, when this knowledge of justification is lost, at the same time Christ and life and the Church are lost" (*amittitur Christus et vita et ecclesia*).[1]

But because this doctrine deals thus, on the one hand, with the forgiveness wrought in Christ and the grace revealed in Him, and, on the other hand, with the proper reception of these by faith, it does not, therefore, direct the religious impulses of man merely to an unemotional contemplation of Christ and of his own faith; but it admonishes him rather to faith as an act directed entirely and immediately upon Christ. It is precisely such an apprehension of Christ that the doctrine recognizes as truly Christian deportment. Man is to seek and to possess all things only in Christ. In this sense the ONE central point is, after all, according to the doctrine before us, nothing more nor less than *Christ Himself*. Hence, also, the very object of the preaching of Christ is to awaken faith. What Luther had presented under the figure of the "bags" of faith and love, he expresses still more succinctly as follows: "It is said very briefly, 'Believe on Christ,' and again, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself'; in these words the doctrine concerning faith is summarized."[2]

To saving faith in Christ belongs further, of necessity, faith in the nature of His person and faith in His work. "This is the most important article of the Christian faith, that the Son is true God and also true man, and that He was sent into the world to save it." Against this, the devil sets in array his army of error in three columns. The first will not grant that Christ is God; the second will not grant that He is man; the third (including the throng of Papists, with their own holiness) will not grant that He does what He has done. Hence, the nature of Christ itself—that He is true God and true man (upon which His work for us depends)—is also called by Luther "our principal article." Again, he embraces all that Christ has done for us briefly in the declaration, that this true God and man has died and risen again for us (cf. Rom iv. 25).[3]

[1] Erl. Ed., xiv, 179; xxiv, 49. Op. Ex., xx, 176.

[2] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 361.

[3] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 44 sqq.; xxiii, 258 sqq.; xlv, 385; xxiv, 115.

Everything is thus made to depend upon the article concerning Christ, the Son of God sent into the world, who has secured forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Whoever has this Christ, has all things. The other articles of Christian doctrine, although likewise founded upon Scripture, are not there so urgently insisted upon. In this doctrine is, however, included the truth, that we obtain grace, not through our own works, but alone through the Mediator. This article and that upon justification are but one. All errors have arisen wherever this doctrine has been neglected. Whoever, on the contrary, holds it fast, will be preserved by it from heresy, and it will secure for him the Holy Spirit, so that he shall be able to "differentiate and judge clearly and plainly" in regard also to all other articles.[1]

We have already seen, especially in our third Book, how the doctrine of the means of grace is related to this doctrine concerning Christ and justification. As man cannot himself work out his own salvation, but must receive it entirely from above, so, likewise, he is authorized to seek it only where, according to the appointment of God and Christ, it is to be found; and God has selected external means corresponding to the bodily nature of man, through which means salvation is to be offered, *i. e.*, the Word and the sacraments. The opinion that we can, instead of employing these, seek God and His salvation by our own thoughts, Luther places upon a par with the notion that we can seek Him with our own works.[2]

Upon the doctrine of the fellowship with the Saviour and with all the members of His mystical body, into which we enter by faith, together with that of the means of grace, rests the doctrine of Luther concerning the Church.

From this central point, Christ, we must now look backward to the articles concerning God Himself, the Trinity, and the Divine Attributes. It is just in Christ, and only in Him, that the Father is known. Thus Luther declares times innumerable, as when he so distinctly asserts that the article concerning Christ is the principal article.[3] Here we may look into the very heart of God. From this central point of view, we recognize that He is essentially Love (*vid.* under "Doctrine of God"). Moreover, the whole doctrine of salvation leads back to the article concern-

[1] Erl. Ed., l, 26 sqq. [2] Ibid., xlvii, 9. [3] Ibid., l, 26.

ing God, the almighty Creator, as a presupposition necessarily involved, since all the activity of God pertaining to salvation, and, especially, the efficacy of the means of grace, are conditioned upon the divine omnipotence. It is the error of the Fanatics, in his view, that they refuse to believe the children's Creed: "I believe in God the Father, almighty Maker," etc. Again, whoever adopts this principal article and foundation must also adopt the other articles. Further, from the relation of man to God, as a sinner in need of salvation, Luther still looks back—as he had done so frequently during his special intercourse with German Mysticism—to the general relation in which man stands to God, as a creature of His hand. Upon this relation rest, in Luther's view, the fundamental commandments given by God for the regulation of man's moral attitude toward Himself. He here argues again, on the basis of faith in God as the Creator, that man can make claim to no merit, nor to anything, of his own: "The creature comes from nothing; nothing, therefore, are all things which the creature can do, if they chance to oppose the Creator, who gave the creature its being." He argues also, that a man who fully believes in the Creator of all things is dead to all things, and must confess that he is able to do nothing by his own power. In this sense, Luther now calls also this article the highest article of faith.[1]

With the doctrine of the Christian means of grace corresponds also, in the teaching of Luther, the manner in which God, even before the sending of His Son into the world, made it possible for men to approach Him,—or, the whole doctrine of divine revelation.

Thus, all the leading topics of Luther's Theology appear in their harmonious connection with the central point of his religious belief, religious aims and religious life, which was, at the same time, the central point of his reformatory teaching.

We have already, in speaking of the proffer of salvation and the revelation of Himself by God to man, touched upon that which is commonly designated the *formal principle* of the Reformation. The general means by which the divine proffer of salvation is tendered to us is, it has been said, the objective Word of God, and this Word is now defined as that which is given to us in the Holy Scriptures. Salvation is therein offered to us, inas-

[1] Erl. Ed., xix, 114 sq., 127. Op. Ex., v, 137 sqq. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 23.

much as therein the divine truth which we are to recognize and apprehend in faith is presented to our spirit, and inasmuch as, in the very act of our reception of this Word, the divine Holy Spirit Himself desires to open our hearts to the understanding of the truth, to faith, and to the life which may be secured by faith, and to strengthen and bless us therein continually. The conception of the Word as the norm of truth and doctrine is inseparably united with that of the Word as a means of grace. Nor have we thus discovered two distinct fundamental ideas. We are merely led to define more precisely the one fundamental idea—Christ, God in Christ, and saving faith in Him—by explaining that Christ is here looked upon as revealing Himself to faith in the Word, and, through the Word, communicating Himself to faith.

But how far, we may ask in conclusion, does the field extend which belongs, in Luther's conception, to the domain of Christian doctrine? What is the peculiarity of this sphere, as compared with other fields of human thought? Luther discriminates strictly between the sphere in which we have to do with our inner, immediate, personal relation to God and that which concerns our outward relations to the created world. It is, in brief, the difference between that which is spiritual, eternal, heavenly, and that which is secular, temporal and earthly. The latter category alone presents for Luther the domain of religious knowledge and theology. Here we must learn "to rule the conscience in the Spirit before God." [1] The doctrine concerning external, secular things Luther here introduces only in so far as the external activity of man, in order to be well-pleasing to God, must flow from the internal source of faith and the spirit of love derived from above, and in so far as man must, even in all secular things, recognize the workmanship of God, and, particularly, in the fundamental appointments for the external moral life, the divine ordinances, if he would in his corresponding activities maintain a good conscience before God. The earthly and secular has here, on the other hand, no place as claiming recognition in its independent character, with the concrete form of its moral ordinances and essential features as controlled by its own peculiar rules and requirements. The former sphere thus appears to Luther as

[1] Erl. Ed., xxix, 138.

peculiarly that of religious and theological knowledge. The two spheres must now, in his view, be sharply distinguished with regard to the sources, criteria, and organs of truth pertaining to them respectively. In the former, the light of the divine Word and that of the Holy Spirit acting through the Word must alone be recognized. Reason must here, as Luther maintains especially in the controversy upon the sacrament, be even designated Frau Hulda, Harlot, etc., the moment it attempts to interfere. This same Luther always cheerfully acknowledges, on the other hand, in secular affairs the "splendid light of reason and the understanding," with which man is so notably endowed. He lauds the noble arts and sciences which are its products. To it he declares subject especially everything which belongs to man's temporal life and to secular government. Authority and power have been given to reason and worldly wisdom to exercise bodily dominion over cattle, birds and fishes, according to Gen. i. 28, and, likewise, to keep house, rear children, govern lands and people, etc. It was not necessary for Christ to give any instruction concerning these things, since this had been already implanted in nature and deeply written on the natural heart. We have already seen these fundamental ideas carried out, especially in the utterances concerning the Church in relation to the papal power, and in those touching the Mosaic Law in the controversy against the new Judaizers. We shall be hereafter again led to consider them, and more fully, when treating of Luther's general view of the external moral life, and thus also of the relation of the Church and its spiritual character to outward forms and ordinances. But upon the discrimination of these spheres depends also the entire doctrine of a secular righteousness, as possible to the unregenerate, and a sphere open to all men for the exercise of free will (cf. the discrimination between *superiora* and *inferiora* in the treatise, *De servo arbitrio*).[1] The whole conception of this distinction belongs to the most important and fruitful fundamental principles of the reformatory truth and teaching. It is inseparably connected with the chief positions maintained concerning righteousness, the Church, etc.; and by means of it, whilst reason is so sternly excluded from the territory of faith, there is, upon the other hand, opened up to secular science a wide and

[1] Erl. Ed., xlv, 327 sq.; xlix, 229, 299; xlvii, 108; l, 77. Briefe, ii, 291. Op. Ex., iii, 212 sq.; xxi, 5 sq. Cf. also Vol. I., p. 150 sq.

independent field, the state being, at the same time, established upon an independent basis, upon which it may freely develop its own resources.

C. Order of Presentation.

It may be thought that, in accordance with the order in which Luther himself treats the principal topics of Christian doctrine, we should, in our present attempt to present his views in systematic form, begin with the doctrines of the Law and Sin, and then discuss the Gospel and the State of Grace. But Luther's discussions of the Law and Gospel rest upon the doctrines of God, of the nature and destiny of man, of the general and original relation between the Creator and the creature, especially man, as objective premises. Thus Luther was compelled, for example, in his summary of the principal articles of doctrine in the Catechism, under the very First Commandment, to set forth the leading ideas embraced in the doctrine concerning God, although the divine nature and character are properly revealed to the individual only through the Gospel and a believing acceptance of its offered grace. The doctrine of the Scriptures, as the rule and source of Christian apprehension of the truth, might likewise find an appropriate place in the exposition of the relation between God and man, if not, indeed, reserved for treatment under the heading of the means of grace. But this, again, must be presupposed in considering the utterances of Luther as to the nature and work of God and all the allied and following doctrines, inasmuch as the manner in which he establishes his dogmatic principles is conditioned in advance by his general conception of the place and authority of the Scriptures. In first considering, as we shall therefore do, according to the usual dogmatic method, the doctrine of the Scriptures, we shall be compelled to begin with Luther's view of the method of divine revelation in general, which is most intimately connected with his apprehension of the special scriptural revelation. If, in doing so, we shall here, and in the discussion of other topics, frequently, as may be inevitable from the intimate mutual relations of Christian truth, be compelled to anticipate certain doctrinal points developed only at later periods, we can do this with the less hesitancy inasmuch as all the leading principles in the teaching of the Reformer have been already presented in the course of our preceding study in the proper order of their historical development.

CHAPTER I.

SOURCE OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

1. *Methods of Revelation.*

WORKS OF NATURE—SCRIPTURE—TRADITION.

God may perhaps (*forte*), says Luther in one place, have appeared to Adam before the Fall "naked," without any external, sensible envelopment of His essential nature and of His presence. After the Fall, He revealed Himself to him enrobed, as it were, in the rustling of the wind—to others, similarly, in later times, in the tabernacle, in the cloud, and in the pillar of fire. Thus Luther places in immediate contrast with the direct vision of God special revelations, in which God selects certain particular sensible objects as signs, or pledges, of His presence (as, under the new covenant, the Word and sacraments). But the idea of an envelopment, in which God now presents Himself to our perception, may, according to Luther, be transferred to the VISIBLE OBJECTS OF NATURE IN GENERAL. He, in one place, calls the whole creation a "mask of God"; only in this can we see God—not face to face, but as through a glass (1 Cor. xiii. 12).[1]

Thus, as Luther says, in harmony with Rom. i. 20, the invisible being of God, *i. e.*, His eternal power and Godhead, is seen when it is recognized in His works, etc. Human reason can itself, although but feebly, infer from the beautiful objects of nature, and from the wonderful and harmonious order of their movements, the existence of an eternal divine Being from whom they have all proceeded, and by whom they all are governed. God has Himself implanted in man sufficient knowledge and intelligence to guide him to this conclusion. Thus even the heathen Aristotle, for example, by logical process inferred the unity of the Ruler of the world. The goodness and grace of God are also displayed to us by these general works of His hand. He

[1] Op. Ex., i, 16. Comm. ad Gal., i, 143 sq.

reveals Himself as a Father by so richly pouring out His blessing upon the whole world. Even hints of the Trinity are everywhere impressed upon the works of creation.[1]

But we must discriminate between that which these works, according to Luther, in themselves contain and indicate and that which man, ensnared in sin, is yet able to discern in them. Adam, had he not sinned, would have possessed a full insight into the significance of the works of God. "He, even untaught, understood the works of God." Even in the smallest flower he would have recognized the omnipotence, wisdom and goodness of God. But fallen man, on the contrary, recognizes but faintly, as has been said, the existence of an eternal Being. Under the curse and the terrors of sin, he fails especially, notwithstanding all the fullness of the blessings showered upon us from heaven, to realize the benevolent disposition of God toward us. This is revealed to us only in the special revelation, whose aim and content is the presentation of Christ, the Son of God and Saviour, and which comes to us in the divine Word. The heart of God is first fully revealed to us in Christ; and only from the supreme work of God, which displays His eternal counsel, namely, the mission of Christ, does there shine forth upon us the revelation of His inmost nature, *i. e.*, the existence of three Persons in the one undivided divine Being. Thus, in the revelation of Christ, the two principal points which are entirely beyond the reach of the natural apprehension of God find expression in their mutual inner harmony. God wishes to be known as He is in His inmost nature, the eternal Being in three Persons, and the heathen, Jews and Turks only mock at this revelation. At the same time, we should recognize Him as a God *for us;* not only as a God apart from created things, and looking upon them from without. We should know what He thinks of us, and what He would have us to do. This neither the heathen, the Turks, the Jews, nor even the Papists know, and even when they call God true, righteous, wise and good, He is still really to their minds a liar, unrighteous and unwise. Such is the difference between the general knowledge (*generalis notitia*) and the special knowledge (*notitia propria*) of God.[2]

It is, therefore, only through the SPECIAL REVELATION of God

[1] Erl. Ed., ix, 2 sqq.; xli, 352; xlix, 93. Op. Ex., v, 304 sqq.

[2] Op. Ex., i, 142. Tisch., Först., i, 319. Erl. Ed., ix, 4 sqq.; xxi, 105; xli, 352; xlvi, 35 sqq. Op. Ex., v, 241 sq. Comm. ad Gal., i, 196.

that we attain a proper knowledge of God and of religious truth. This is the revelation made in His Word as objectively presented to us; and this Word is embraced for us in the Sacred Scriptures. To a true appropriation of this Word to ourselves we are led by the agency of the Holy Spirit. But this agency of the Spirit aims only to establish in the individual a receptivity for the revelation which has been fully and sufficiently given; and even this the Spirit seeks to accomplish, as will be developed at length in connection with the doctrine of the means of grace, directly through the Scriptures. Luther knows nothing of any divine revelation through which truth may be imparted to us apart from, or beyond, the Scriptures.

Luther had already, amid the anxieties of his monastery life, learned to know how much may depend upon the possession of such an objective divine Word. Prompted by his own bitter experience, he ever after most earnestly exhorted all who felt tempted to indulge in speculations upon the highest problems of religious knowledge and of the inner life, instead of yielding to such impulse, to cling simply to the revealed Word. When the conflict with the Papacy had led to a strict enunciation of the scriptural principle in opposition to the professed objective word of truth which was supposed to proceed from Pope and councils, Luther was at once driven, by the outbreak of Fanaticism, to raise the strongest possible barriers against the new error which placed beside and above the Scriptures an inner word, revealing itself, as was claimed, within the heart of the individual believer. That man's own reason could, under any circumstances, ignoring the objective Word and the Spirit from on high therein revealed, lead men to God or to the knowledge of divine truth, was an idea excluded by Luther's doctrine upon the state of man under the dominion of sin. In the productions of the Fanatics, attributed by themselves to the supposed higher inner light, Luther sees, in reality, nothing more than human wisdom, or reason; and in this category he includes the results of real thought and intelligent reasoning, as well as those of subjective emotion, or mere fantasy. The deliverances of the Fanatics and the utterances of the supposed ecclesiastical mediums of divine revelation he regards, moreover, as proceeding from one and the same source. The Papacy itself is the creature of mere "enthusiasm" (fanaticism), inasmuch as the Pope claims to hold all laws in the shrine of his

own heart, and would have us accept as Spirit and justice whatever decision he and his Church may promulgate, however contrary the latter may be to the Scriptures. He finds the origin of all heresy, even that of the Papacy and of Mohammed, in the "enthusiasm" that inheres in Adam and his children.[1]

Inasmuch as the objective divine Word was, in its original introduction into the world, accompanied with special miracles, visions, apparitions of angels, etc., Luther does not deny the *possibility* of revelations of this kind at the present day. But he always gives prominence, even when dealing with the history of the old covenant, to the fact, that every new revelation of truth and every new human instrumentality employed in its dissemination stood in intimate connection with the divine Word previously revealed, and based their claim to acceptance upon their harmony with the latter. We shall observe hereafter how he makes the Gospel announced in Eden after the Fall already a criterion of later claims. Thus, Luther held it to be necessary for every new revelation or new truth, though brought by an angel from heaven, to prove its legitimacy by its harmony with the divine Word already given in the Scriptures, whereas in the theories of the Fanatics and the Papacy the case is just the reverse. But although miraculous announcements of this character are yet possible, they now no longer lie in the line of the divine purpose and order, since saving truth has now been abundantly revealed in Christ and in the Scriptures which testify of Him. Nor is there longer any need of special external manifestations and signs to confirm the truth thus revealed (see Chap. III.). Particularly in the Reformation then in progress, the Word of Scripture, he maintained, and the Spirit working through that Word, must be allowed of themselves to do the whole work. Luther not only never besought any special revelations, or signs, in support of his apprehension of Gospel truth; but he had, on the contrary, dreading the perils of "enthusiasm" and the deceptions of the devil, entered into a covenant with his God, that the latter should not send to him any visions, dreams nor angels. The miracles claimed by the Papacy in support of its deceptions are partly fraudulent and partly the work of the devil.[2]

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 139 sq. Cf. Vol. I., p. 509.

[2] Erl. Ed., l, 186 sq. Op. Ex., ix, 63, 69, 302; iv, 158 sqq.; v, 218, 233, 235 sq. Cf. Vol. I., p. 466.

The relation of Luther to the TRADITIONS OF THE CHURCH, which, in their merely human doctrinal statements and their practical ordinances, claimed a place of equal honor by the side of the divine Word, remains the same as already noted.[1] He still, for example, appeals to the warning of Deut. iv. 2 ("Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you," etc.), which he had employed as a text in his tract of A. D. 1522, *Von Menschenlehre zu meiden* (Human Doctrine to be Avoided). In what sense, and to what extent, Luther could still allow room in the Church for "traditions" or human ordinances, which were not contrary to the Word of God, and which might, therefore, be observed or neglected at will, has also been already explained in another connection. Luther had here to meet especially the use made by the Papists of the declaration of Jesus, John xvi. 12: "I have yet many things to say unto you," in support of their claim, that we should believe and hold, along with the truth revealed in Scripture, also whatever the Councils and Fathers have said or appointed. To this Luther replies, that Christ certainly promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit should guide them "into all truth." How would the notion of these jugglers, that only *after* the time of the apostles should instruction be given in the things to be believed and done by Christians, tally with such a promise? Jesus gives not the slightest indication that the "many things" are to be anything more than what He has already taught them. He had already abundantly declared to them all things pertaining to faith and Christian life, as He Himself asserts in John xv. 15. The Lord does not, in fact, by the "many things" referred to, mean any new doctrine or laws, but merely further information as to what was before them, what they should have to suffer and what consolation they should experience in their afflictions. This it was which He meant to say they could not then endure to hear. Moreover, the Church should by all means make far more use of that which Christ had then already said to His disciples. She ought to spread it abroad far and wide, as the apostles did, and, as far as it is possible in our day, to proclaim it more abundantly among Christian people and to scatter it abroad in every way, in proportion to the measure in which each believer has himself received the consoling

[1] Vol. I., p. 501.

revelation. But it dare not be made in any way different from the Word proclaimed by Christ Himself, but must remain ever as He gave it.[1]

Under this activity in interpreting in the power of the Spirit, and further expounding, the contents of the divine Word, Luther includes also the gift of "prophesying," which is represented in such passages as 1 Cor. xiv. and Rom. xii. 7 as among the endowments of believers.[2] He attributes to them also the spirit of that form of prophecy which deals with the *future* of Christ's kingdom —but this only "in so far as we have received it from the apostles and derived it from their writings."[3]

The Scriptures are thus represented as the norm of truth, the Christian's touch-stone,[4] and it is thus from them alone, as its source, that the truth can be properly derived. By the side of their pure and full illumination, the feeble light which falls upon us from the general revelation of God still, indeed, retains its significance. Luther frequently points believers directly to the blessings of God in the world of nature, and to the evidence of His wisdom which they afford. But he would have accepted as valid no conclusion, drawn from this general source alone, which could not find confirmation also in the divine Word.

We now proceed to trace the leading separate features of the doctrine of Luther touching this divine Word presented in the Scriptures.

2. *The Ground of Faith in the Scriptures. Inner Witness.*

NOT AUTHORITY OF CHURCH—SUPPORT OF ANTIQUITY NOT DECISIVE—INNER WITNESS OF SPIRIT—RELATION TO CHRIST THE CRITERION.

Luther designates the Sacred Scriptures as "the Book given by God, the Holy Spirit, to His Church."[5] Without any discrimination, he presents as the rule of faith and practice, now "the Scriptures," now "the Word of God," employing the two terms as perfectly synonymous.

But how does he arrive at this firm conviction that the Scrip-

[1] Erl. Ed., xxviii, 321; xxvi, 33; lxv, 90 sq.; xii, 133 sqq.; xxx, 400; l, 68 sqq.

[2] Supra, p. 94.

[3] Erl. Ed., viii, 21, 114; xxii, 154; l, 85.

[4] Op. Ex., iii, 219, Briefe, vi, 424.

[5] Erl. Ed., xxvi, 100.

tures in general possess this divine character? And what books—and these on what grounds—does he recognize as parts of Scripture and sharing the character attributed to it? Still further, to what results shall we be led if we inquire more particularly as to his conception of this divine character, of the divine origin of the volume, of the relation between the spiritual activity of the writers themselves and the divine Spirit working in them, and of the propriety of ascribing such lofty character and origin to all the separate parts? It must then also be considered, how the divine contents of the Scriptures may be appropriated by us, how they are made plain to our minds, and how we are to interpret them.

It could no longer occur to Luther as possible to attempt to *base regard for the Scriptures upon regard for the Church or her official utterances*. Much rather is the Church itself, in his view, as we long since noted, begotten of the Gospel, and subject to it. "The Church does not make the Word, but is made by it." From this position, in opposition to the papal conception, he is not induced to retreat a single step by his desire to maintain against the Fanatics the objective validity of the Scriptures. He was led frequently to express his dissent from the position of Augustine: "I would not believe the Gospel unless the authority of the Church Catholic impelled me."[1] Great as is the importance which he attaches, for the awakening of faith, to the impression made by the harmonious testimony of the Church, yet the only real basis for faith in the Gospel is to be found for each individual in the fact that it is the Word of God, and that he *inwardly perceives* that it is the truth, and would do so though an angel from heaven and all the world should preach against it.[2]

If we may apply to faith in the Scriptures what Luther has said of faith in the truth which they contain, we shall have his own direct authority for an *appeal to the antiquity of the faith* and

[1] Adv. Man. 5. "Evangelio non crederem, nisi me ecclesiæ catholicæ commoveret auctoritas." [The explanation of this language which gives to the imperfect tense the sense of the pluperfect, in accordance with the "African dialect," thus reducing the axiom to the mere historical statement, that Augustine was led to a knowledge of the Scriptures by the tradition of the Church, is rejected by the best authorities. He doubtless meant to assert, as Luther understood the words, that the Scriptures must be accredited by the sanction of the Church.—*Tr.*]

[2] Vol. I., pp. 319, 408. Jena, ii, 369 b. Erl. Ed., xxviii, 41 sq. Vol. I., p. 320. Jena, ii, 305, 562 b, and especially, Erl. Ed., xxviii, 339 sqq.; xxx, 394 sqq.

the approval of the Church; as, for example, in support of the doctrines of infant baptism and the Lord's Supper. In reference to belief in the Trinity, he in one passage declares that it has positive testimonies and support even of an external character, such as its antiquity, extending back to the days of Adam, the miracles performed through it, its secure position maintained against all attacks and persecutions, and, finally, the sure prophecies of the Christian religion touching its own future experience and that of other forms of religion in the world, which agree so well, and so unfailingly accord, with the actual course of history.[1] Now we have undoubtedly a right, in view of Luther's known views, to employ these arguments in support of the claims of the Scriptures themselves, and we thus secure an entire series of apologetic deliverances upon the subject. Luther often speaks of the testimony which God bears to Christian truth and to His Word by its wonderful preservation; and in such connections he also evidently thinks of the Word as given to us in the Scriptures. He refers, further, to the testimony of the Church, in discussing the claims of those books of the Bible whose canonical character he disputed, and that in such a way as to acknowledge the former as furnishing at least a desirable concomitant testimony in such cases. Thus he appeals, in the question concerning 2 Maccabees, from the professed unanimous testimony of the Church to Jerome; and against the canonical character of St. James, to the judgment of many authors. He cites, likewise, against the book of Jude the fact, that the Ancient Fathers had "cast it out of the chief Scriptures"; against the Apocalypse, that it was also, according to Eusebius, by many of the Ancient Fathers not regarded as a work of the apostle; and against the three books just named, together with the Epistle to the Hebrews, that they formerly "had a different repute" (*ein ander Ansehen*).[2] But the significance which Luther thus attaches to the antiquity of the faith and its universal acceptance in the Church does not, as we have already observed, in any way conflict with his position, that the decisive ground of our confidence in it nevertheless lies, and must lie, elsewhere. Such declarations as above cited in regard to the Apocryphal Books, or *Antilegomenoi*, by no means

[1] Vol. I., pp. 408, 421, 505 sqq. Vol. II., pp. 53 sq., 160 sq., 163.
[2] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 317, 322, 406. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 158, 159, 154.

imply that the external testimony, the lack of which would be an argument against the canonicity of any book, could of itself be accepted as sufficient testimony in its behalf. Such a lack of testimony is not even, as we shall find, for Luther the most weighty reason for his denial of the canonicity of particular books. He makes no further use of arguments drawn from the prophecies recorded in Scripture, by whose historical fulfilment our faith in the Word of God is to be confirmed.

There is in the writings of Luther a notable absence of any apologetic discussion of the separate criteria by which the claim of a divine character for the Scriptures must be tested. It may be said in explanation of this,[1] that no one in his day denied the divine origin of the Scriptures, and there was hence no occasion to defend it. On the other hand, this was assumed by all, and the Reformer was able to appeal to the Scriptures, which all alike acknowledged as divine, for arguments against the presumptuous claims of ecclesiastical tradition and the so-called inner light of the Fanatics. He himself[1] at one time remarked, that there is no longer any need of miracles, since the Scriptures are now accepted even by the Papists and all the sects.[2] Had he been brought into contact with parties opposing the Scriptures at large, he would no doubt have devoted much more attention to formal argument in their behalf. Yet it is to be, of course, assumed that the grounds upon which faith in the divine Word must be originally based, and had in his own case been actually established, were clearly enough defined in his own mind. This has been manifest in our earlier investigations, and now again appears with equal clearness.

We have just quoted the assertion, that every one must "*realize within himself* that it is truth." It is, according to Luther, the Holy Spirit who enables us, in the use of the Scriptures, to realize this. What Luther asserts, especially of the origination of faith by the Holy Spirit by means of the Scriptures, must be applied also to faith in the Scriptures themselves. Thus it is said, in the passage in which he speaks of external signs for the confirmation of faith: The Holy Spirit writes such (conviction) upon the hearts of men. The true hearer of the divine Word, says he, can testify that it is not the word of a man, but assuredly the Word of God: for God teaches him inwardly; he is drawn by

[1] Vol. I., p. 509. [2] Erl., Ed., l, 87.

the Father. The true *divine faith* believes the Word, not for the sake of the preacher who declares it, "but *it feels* that what is said is certainly true" (*er fühlet, dass so gewiss wahr ist*). "*The Word, of itself*, must satisfy the heart, must so enclose and lay hold upon the man, that he, though ensnared in it, feels how true and right it is." Thus the Samaritans (John iv. 42) were, for example, compelled to believe. Luther here maintains most positively the doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit and that of divinely-wrought faith (*fides divina*). Accordingly, had he upon any occasion been called to face antagonists refusing to acknowledge the validity of the Word of God, we may be perfectly assured that he would have had no fear of meeting decisive force in any argument whatsoever based upon external criteria. In the light of this, we must understand a statement of the *Tischreden:* "With any one who denies that the evangelical Scriptures are the Word of God I will not argue a single word; for we should not enter into dispute with any one who rejects the first principles (*prima principia*, perhaps in the sense of 'primary sources')."[1]

But in all the utterances of Luther concerning the "divine faith," he speaks not of faith in the divinity of the Scriptures in themselves considered, but he includes also faith in the truth which they contain, and has, indeed, for the most part, the latter chiefly in view. Thus, also, in the process of development experienced in his own inner life, the "divine faith" in the origin and character of Scripture, as contrasted with the human recognition which he had accorded it from his childhood, was not awakened until the Spirit had made clear to his mind, and imprinted upon his heart, the truth which it contained. Rather, on the contrary, had the chief content of Scripture, the fundamental doctrine of salvation, been already fully and powerfully revealed to his spirit by the Spirit from on high before he clearly recognized the fundamental difference between reverence for Scripture and reverence for ecclesiastical ordinances. Then already, also, had the Word of God in the Scriptures impressed itself upon his inner spiritual nature as a grand testimony to the Law, on the one hand, and to grace upon the other, with its central point in Christ Himself, to whom the Law was designed directly to lead man.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxviii, 340. Cf. Vol. I., pp. 322, 408, 508. Erl. Ed., vi, 231; xlvii, 352 sq.; x, 154 sq. Tischr., Först., i, 28.

In fact, this attitude toward the Scriptures, as such, and toward their contents is the characteristic feature of Luther's method of faith and doctrine. As he had, in his own use of the Scriptures, been drawn by the Father to the Son and Saviour, so, likewise, it was only after he had come to rightly apprehend and know the Son that he learned to rely clearly and firmly upon the Scriptures themselves, in contrast with all human authority and human fanaticism. In his own writings, however, we find no closer examination or analysis of the relation between these two aspects in the development of faith.

With this general attitude toward the Scriptures corresponded, further, his conception of the proper position which the separate books of the Bible should, by virtue of their contents, occupy in relation to each other and as constituent parts of one whole—and of the significance which is accordingly to be ascribed to each. *Christ Himself is the central point*, by its relation to which all else is to be estimated. To Him—to the blessing announced already to Abraham, to the Vanquisher of the serpent announced already to Adam, points the whole volume of Scripture in both Old and New Testaments, with its commandments and promises, its divine deeds and divine utterances. He is "the point in the circle whence the whole circle has emanated and which is seen from every part of it." He is the "Lord and King of the Scriptures."[1] Upon the relation of each book to Him, therefore, depends its position and significance.

Inasmuch as the inner value of the separate books to faith is conditioned by this principle, it is just upon this that the chief stress is laid in Luther's decision of the question whether any particular book has a valid claim to canonical authority. In this light we can understand the declaration: "*This is the real touchstone by which all books are to be judged, i. e., when we see whether they make much of Christ or not.*" That which does not teach Christ is not apostolic, even though it be taught by St. Peter or St. Paul; on the other hand, that which preaches Christ would be apostolic, even though it were the work of Judas, Annas, etc.[2] Of course, he does not mean by this that every book which pro-

[1] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 242 sqq.; xxxiv, 17 sqq.; xlvi, 348. Comm. ad Gal., i, 388 sq.

[2] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 157; see also ibid., 114 sq.; li, 337 (where Luther demands particularly testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ).

claims Christ, and is accordingly apostolic in its contents, is therefore to be placed upon an equality with the writings of the apostles themselves. He does not here mean to deny the supremacy which he ascribes to the Bible and *its* testimony of Christ above all other and merely human exhibitions of saving truth. This cannot be his meaning, even when he in one passage calls Melanchthon's *Loci* "a little book worthy not only of immortality, but of any ecclesiastical canon."[1] On the contrary, he cherishes, in regard to all human books, even though faithfully teaching of Christ, and especially in regard to his own, the fear that they may lead men to neglect the reading of the *one* Book "which alone is the fount of all wisdom."[2] He valued books of this class only in so far as they were in manifest harmony with the original source of Christian truth. A lack, upon the other hand, of such testimony in behalf of Christ as may and should still be borne by Christians of the post-apostolic period is for him an evidence against the claims of any book to apostolicity and canonical authority. We find this principle applied especially in his utterances in regard to the Epistle of St. James. We have already cited his opinion as to the general spirit of this epistle. It was in 1522 that he asserted: James teaches nothing about Christ, although he mentions Him a number of times: instead, he urges, in opposition especially to St. Paul, only to the Law and its works. He calls it a real *epistle of straw* in comparison with John, Paul and Peter. Nor was it only in the earlier years of his life that he ventured to express such an opinion. He declared, in that portion of the *Church Postils* which first appeared in 1543, that this epistle was not composed by an apostle; that it is not to be compared by any means with the writings of the apostles; and that it is not altogether in harmony with pure doctrine. In his *Latin Commentary upon Genesis*, he even presumes to say in reference to the conclusions of the epistle touching the doctrine of justification: James argues badly—James wanders (*delirat*).[3]

We are therefore, according to Luther, to place this inner

[1] Jena, iii, 166. Cf. Preface to Latin Works, Jena, 1.; Tischr., ii, 439.

[2] Op. Ex., iv, 328. Cf. infra, p. 251.

[3] Vol. I., pp. 322, 406. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 156 sq. (A. D. 1522), 115 (1522); li, 337 (1523); viii, 267 (Cf. 167 Anm. and Erl. Ed., vii, Preface, p. xii). Op. Ex., v, 227.

criticism, and that, too, as being the most important, side by side with the consensus of ancient external testimony, which he regarded as insufficient to decide absolutely the character of separate books. He took also into account considerations other than those of dogmatical character. The employment of expressions found in the Petrine and Pauline Epistles points, he thinks, to a later origin. The author of Jude epitomized the Second Epistle of Peter, and speaks also of that apostle as would be done by a disciple living at a later period. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks in the same way.[1]

This dogmatical decision of such questions was possible only in view of the peculiar way in which his faith in the Scriptures and their contents had been developed. We have traced the method by which he was led to regard the central point of their testimony, *i. e.*, that concerning Christ, as certain. This at once made him equally certain which were the "*genuine* (*rechtschaffenen*) *and noblest books.*"[2] By these the others must be judged. These principles are observed by Luther in all his utterances in regard to

3. *The Separate Parts of Scripture.*

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS—MOSES AND THE LAW—PROPHETS—PSALMS—PROVERBS—ECCLESIASTES—SONG OF SOLOMON—JOB—HISTORICAL BOOKS—APOCRYPHA—SUPERIORITY OF NEW TESTAMENT—EPISTLES OF PAUL—ROMANS—GALATIANS—EPHESIANS—GOSPEL OF JOHN—I. JOHN—I. PETER—SYNOPTIC GOSPELS—ACTS—II. AND III. JOHN—II. PETER—HEBREWS—JAMES—JUDE—REVELATION.

It is their common relation to the one central point which constitutes the OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS ONE BOOK. Christ and His apostles constantly refer us to the former as the basis of the latter; whilst the entire contents of the Old Testament itself point directly forward to the New Testament revelation of salvation. The former is a law-book; but it is precisely through this Law that the race is to be prepared for the Gospel. Side by

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 157. (Luther thinks that by the "James" here spoken of is meant the son of Zebedee), 158; lii, 272–3; lxiii, 154.

[2] Erl. Ed., li, 237.

side, moreover, with the Law, and even from the history of the Fall onward, runs also the line of evangelical promises.

Luther sees here, particularly in Moses, the herald and representative of the revelation of the Law, and represents the teaching of the Law and the pointing out of sin as the "peculiar chief doctrine of the Old Testament." It is the "chief doctrine," however, only in that it is there most prominently presented, whereas even then already, and particularly in the books of Moses, the "much better article" and "first article" is the promise. And so abundantly and fully does he find this (see, for further illustration, under the discussion of the Doctrine of Salvation) developed already under the old covenant, that he can say: In the Old Testament everything is already announced which was to come to pass in Christ in the future and to be preached concerning Him. There is no word in the New Testament which does not point back to some place in the Old Testament where it is already announced. In this, therefore, consists, in his view, the chief value of the Old Testament Scriptures. The idea of a gradual historical development in the revelation of truth under the old covenant, although not altogether overlooked in his writings, falls far into the background, whilst we note a constant effort to discover everywhere, in as definite a form as possible, the great saving truths of the Gospel.

In connection with the revealed Word, with its commandments and promises, we must consider also the significance of the divinely inspired histories of the Old Testament. The grace and justice of God are in these set before us as illustrated in particular examples. Especially do we see in God's dealings with His saints of old the eternal purpose of salvation, which was at length fully revealed in Christ, and which is to be accomplished in us all. We must not expect to find in Luther any such view of the course of Old Testament history, in its entire scope and in broad general outline, as is rightly demanded of modern theology. The particular narratives are rather used separately as illustrations. The value of the latter lies in their character as actual occurrences, and is not to be sought in any allegorical interpretation.[1]

All the above is applicable, as has been said, already to the

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 7 sqq. Briefe, ii, 650. (Many were at that time disposed to despise the Old Testament.) Erl. Ed., xlvii, 267 sqq.; iv, 196; xxix, 157 sq.; x, 163 sq. Op. Ex., xxii, 13.

Books of Moses, and, indeed, particularly to them. They take precedence, by virtue of their inner significance, of all the other books of the Bible. As Homer has been called the father of all poets, so Moses is, in fact, the source of all the sacred books and the father of all the prophets. He was himself the greatest man and prophet before the birth of Christ, yea, from the beginning of time. God gave to him His commandments and the promise of Christ's coming, and all the prophets received the knowledge of these from him. Even the New Testament has "flowed out and distilled from Moses, like rain from the clouds, or dew from heaven" (Deut. xxxii. 2–4).[1]

Of Moses' proclamation of the Law, Luther says, indeed, it has only a subordinate authority (*geringeren Befehl*). Moses received the Law from angels, and in it God does not Himself speak. When we hear Moses exhorting to good works, it is as though we were listening to one who was carrying out the instructions of a prince: but this is not hearing God Himself; for when God Himself speaks with men, they can hear nothing but pure grace, mercy and everything that is good, as He is in His very nature gracious, merciful and kind. Thus God now speaks to us as He is in His very nature, not through a servant nor an angel, but through His own Son and the Holy Spirit. Here we hear a paternal voice, which is pure, unfathomable and unspeakable love and grace. But this is said with reference to the character of the Law in so far as God has not as yet revealed therein His own real nature, and with reference to the imparting of the Law through the human instrument in so far as such revelation partakes also of the same imperfect character. It is perfectly consistent with this representation, that the Law given through Moses and the angels and marked by the failure to exhibit properly the divine character, should nevertheless, as Luther everywhere else teaches, have its origin in the appointment and instructions of God Himself, who desired at that time to reveal Himself only in this limited way. It is further characteristic of the revelation of the Law made by God through Moses, that this Law can bring to no hearer the Holy Spirit, although Moses himself was already moved by the Spirit, and in the light of the Spirit bore his testimony concerning the Law itself. In so far, indeed, as the Law

[1] Briefe, ii, 650. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 22; 377; xlvii, 268; lii, 290.

was designed merely for the Jews, it was accordingly given through Moses by *God Himself*. God had thus ordained the Law as a special discipline for that nation and with a special regard to their inward spiritual state, and yet, at the same time, included in the outward ordinances also indications pointing forward to Christ, until He should Himself appear in Christ. Thus Luther, despite the fact already emphasized, that God, in the sense indicated, does not Himself speak in the Law, yet says again, without qualification, of the Decalogue: Moses, the greatest preacher, received it from God Himself, who thereby testified that this is His eternal will. He says further, of the "forensic and judicial laws of Moses, which are not binding upon us": Nevertheless it is a law divinely written and promulgated,—but again: I must give attention to *this*, when *God says anything*, whether it is intended for *me*.[1] It will be observed how this conception of the revelation given in the Law differs from that found in Luther's *First Exposition of the Psalms*, where the Law of Moses appeared to be contrasted, as a human law, with the Law of the Lord.[2]

The exalted opinion which Luther entertained of the writings of Moses is manifest especially in his *Commentary upon Genesis*. No feature, even in the historical narratives, is esteemed of such small importance, that he does not seek to trace in it a divinely-designed significance for our faith and life; for we must ever bear in mind, as he so frequently reminds us, that the Holy Spirit was the original author (*Urheber*) of this book.[3]

The great heralds of the Old Testament revelation, next to Moses, are, according to Luther, the PROPHETS. In accordance with the usage of the New Testament, he designates the ancient Scriptures briefly as "Moses and the prophets." The latter base their deliverances upon Moses, both in their enforcement of the Law and in their announcements of the Gospel message. It was the design of God that, in their expositions of the Law, they should, according to the original divine purpose, "proclaim it in love." But it is the message of salvation which is distinctly the principal thing in the prophets: "They make His people in

[1] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 357, 271. Briefe, ii, 650. Erl. Ed., xvi, 233 sqq.; i, 135. Op. Ex., vi, 14. Erl. Ed., xxxvi, 46; cf. supra, p. 36.

[2] Vol. I., p. 115.

[3] Op. Ex., vii, 313.

their own day dependent upon the Christ to come."[1] They all, as we have heard, had recourse to Moses. But although Moses was thus helpful to them, yet the peculiar character and value of their testimony lay, for Luther, in the fact that the Holy Spirit put it directly into their mouths: the prophet has his understanding of the truth, without intervening means, from God—has no master but God. As to the relation of these two aspects of prophecy to one another, no further explanation is offered by Luther. He in one place discriminates as follows: The prophets, who are so called because they have received the Word from the Lord without any intervening medium, have, indeed, heard the Law; but they have received the wisdom of the Gospel by revelation from the Holy Spirit, just as St. Paul also boasts that he has received the Gospel from Christ Himself from heaven. Luther points, indeed, expressly to those evangelical revelations which the prophets found as well in the writings of Moses and David; but it is not their human meditation upon what they find thus already revealed, but an independent and superhuman inspiration, attaching itself to the earlier revelations, which is the real source of their new and distinctive testimony concerning Christ.[2] Among these prophetic testimonies, he regards that of Isa. liii. as the loftiest, richest and most specific: the entire Scriptures, even the New Testament (outside of the writings of Paul), scarcely contain any passage which can equal this. It was, beyond question, the specific prophecies concerning Christ, and especially concerning His death, contained in the prophecy of Daniel, which led the Reformer to designate that prophet as the most excellent after Isaiah.[3]

But the high regard which Luther thus entertained for the prophets did not restrain him from expressing adverse opinions concerning separate portions of their deliverances. His respect for them was based upon the testimony which they bear to Christ. It is this, which is the criterion by which all Scripture is to be estimated, which gives them their exalted place. But they contain also prophecies concerning other future things. This latter form of prophesying, he openly declares in the *Church Postils*, is

[1] Erl. Ed., xlii, 130; xiv, 130. Op. Ex., xxii, 12.

[2] Ibid., xxxv, 134; xlv, 59.

[3] Op. Ex., xxiii, 441. Erl. Ed., iii, 266; Tischr., iv, 404.

one of the most insignificant of prophetic gifts, and even comes sometimes from the devil. It is a form of prophesying which is not needed in the New Testament, and which makes faith no better. The prophets of the Old Testament are therefore so called, principally because they prophesied concerning Christ, and, by their expositions of the divine Word, guided the people aright in faith, "much rather than because they sometimes foretold things concerning kings and the course of earthly events, which (kind of prophesying) they *exercised also on their own account, and hence often failed in it:* but the former kind of prophecy they exercised daily, and never failed in it."

As to the human, and therefore also humanly defective, intellectual activity of the prophets, we have an open and candid expression, dating from the closing period of the Reformer's life (A. D. 1543). He has recalled the divine injunction to search the Scriptures. In this way, doubtless, says he, the prophets studied in Moses, and the later prophets in the earlier, and wrote down in a book the good thoughts then given them by the Holy Ghost; for they were not such men as, like the spirits and vain rabble of modern times, to cast Moses aside and invent fabrications of their own. He then proceeds: "But although hay, wood and stubble were sometimes gathered along with the truth by these good and faithful teachers and students of Scripture, and not always pure silver, gold and precious stones, yet the foundation," etc. In this last quotation, Luther had in mind, indeed, all those who have taught upon the basis of the Scriptures; but, in view of its connection with the discussion which precedes it, we cannot avoid the application of it also, and particularly, to the prophets.[1]

In the collection of the utterances of the prophets in written form, finally, Luther, without hesitancy, allows the agency of other persons to us unknown—an agency, moreover, which is betrayed in the imperfect character of the work, and especially in the lack of proper arrangement. He notes this, for example, in the order of the different sections of Isaiah and Jeremiah, from which he infers, especially in the latter case, that the separate portions of their writings were not arranged as we have them by the prophet himself, but "are taken piecemeal from his address as

[1] Erl. Ed., viii, 23; lxiii, 279.

delivered, and recorded in the book." It appears to him, likewise, that the prophecy of Hosea is not written in its full and entire form, but that certain sections and separate utterances are taken from his sermons and collected in a book.[1]

The PSALMS constitute for Luther, in connection with Moses and the prophets (in the restricted sense of the term), by far the most important part of the Old Testament. They are to be classed with the prophets in view of their prophecies concerning Christ and the congregation of believers, which Luther, to the end of his life, always delighted to trace. David he regards as essentially a prophet. He expresses unbounded astonishment at the prophetic illumination of the Psalmist, as manifested particularly in Ps. cx., in which he almost transcends the attainments of the prophets themselves.[2] Yet he now no longer, as in his *First Exposition of the Psalms*, thinks it necessary to find everywhere, if at all possible, immediate reference to Christ. He finds, rather, the significance of the Psalms in general to lie in the fact that we have recorded in them at the same time what, according to the language and circumstances of the sacred singers, especially of David, all saints do and experience, and what Christ, the chief of all saints, has done and suffered. Particularly does he delight to trace in the trials of the pious a prefiguring of the Saviour's experiences; and even when he finds in the text direct reference to the sufferings of Christ, he carries out the thought in application also to the circumstances of those who belong to Christ. He finds the death and resurrection of Christ so clearly foretold in the Psalter, and the condition and essential nature of Christ's kingdom and of the whole Christian world so distinctly prefigured, that the Psalter might well be called a little Bible. He rejoices that we can in it, not only observe the works of the saints of old, but hear the very words which they employed, and still employ, in addressing God, and that their hearts and the inmost treasures of their souls are here revealed to us. In view of the prayers of the saints which they contain, he classifies the Psalter with the Lord's Prayer. God has given them both to us, and taught us to use them in our own petitions.[3]

The traditional titles of the Psalms are commonly accepted by

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 57; lxi, 74 (1528 and 1532).

[2] Ibid., xl, 40.

[3] Ibid., lxiii, 27 sqq., 34.

Luther as correct. But he frequently seeks also to establish the claims of the reputed authors by independent arguments, based upon the contents and language of the compositions themselves. Yet we find him describe the traditional ascription of Psalm cxxvii. to the authorship of Solomon, although the internal evidence appears to him to support the claim, merely as "quite probable" (*sane verisimile*).[1]

Next to the books already mentioned, Luther placed the three which bear the name of SOLOMON, attributing to them a different and peculiar significance. His view may be thus briefly stated: All three treat, in a general way, of the moral life which all men should lead before God and before the world, and not of the chief articles, *i. e.*, Christ and justification through Him. But they do this in such a way as to refer our entire earthly life and all our earthly activities back to God, who rules in all things, and to faith in Him. The first of these books, indeed, the *Proverbs*, deals, for the most part, in its exhortations, with the life of the individual in its relations to the world at large, to its own interests, and to the affairs of the family. It is, in so far, a volume upon "economy" (*liber oeconomicus*). Solomon seeks in it especially to instruct and train the young. To this end, he constantly cites the commandments and works of God, as, indeed, the commandments and works of God are the original source of all proverbs, and the proverbs of every language are, by virtue of this basis in the works of God (even where the Word of God is unknown), true and reliable. The contents of *Ecclesiastes* he thus describes: Just as we are from the Proverbs to learn obedience, as opposed to reckless folly and forwardness, so from this book we are to learn from life's trials and its failure to satisfy the heart the vanity of all human undertakings, in order that we may commit all things to the disposal of divine wisdom. The substance of the book is expressed in Matt. vi. 34. At a later period, Luther attributes to the book and its exhortations a special reference to the heads of families and to governments; and, finally, a very specific reference to the latter: It might be called "*politica vel oeconomica Solomonis*"; it is a political volume (*liber politicus*), not in the sense of establishing laws for human governments, which is the province of human reason, but as counseling the

[1] Op. Ex., xix, 271; xx, 48.

rulers of the nations (and of separate families) to fear God in their various stations, and to endure with courage and fortitude the attendant burdens and anxieties. Of Solomon himself, Luther then remarks, in a general way, that he, in contrast with David, whose calling was to testify of his successor, Christ, and of justification, had been especially called to be a "doctor politicus," in the sense above indicated. The *Song of Solomon* he interprets in the same spirit. Here, he affirms, Solomon, as in the other books, celebrates the consoling truth that where obedience and good government are found, there God dwells, and with His Word, the kiss of His lips, kisses and fondles His beloved bride. Solomon had immediately in view his own kingdom, which he, by the favor of God, governed in unbroken peace. The figure here employed is like that of Theuerdank, who brings to Maximilian his bride, Ehrenreich. Luther does not ascribe the composition of Ecclesiastes directly to Solomon, but suggests that what the king had, after long and deep reflection upon human affairs, publicly expressed in an assembly, or at a feast, in the presence of some of his great men, was noted down and collected by others. Of the Song of Solomon he remarks, likewise, that it has the appearance of a book of extracts, consisting of utterances caught by others from the lips of Solomon.[1]

The Book of Job is to be classed, in Luther's judgment, in accordance with the nature of its contents, with those Psalms in which are revealed to us the inner emotions of God's persecuted saints and the dark ways of the divine dealings with them. Job he considers as especially an example of that severest form of spiritual trial, which Christ was afterwards to endure, namely, abandonment by God and the realization of the divine wrath and hell. He lays no stress, however, upon the actual historical character of the narrative. In the *Church Postils*, and that, too, in the portion which was added only at a later date, he says: The Book of Job presents us a good illustration of what the devil can do against us, showing us, in an excellent romance composed by a poet, how Satan comes before God, etc. His opinion, more accurately expressed, was, upon the testimony of the *Tischreden:*

[1] Erl. Ed., xliii, 35–41, 91; xxii, 209. Op. Ex., xx, 48: xxi, 5 sq., 12 sq., 273 sqq., 278, 284. Luther, in Tischr., iv, 400 sq, suggests that Ecclesiastes may have been first constructed as one volume by Sirach, who may have collected the material from many books, found perhaps in the Ptolemaic library.

"The Book of Job is a history, afterwards cast into the form of a poem, recounting that which actually occurred in the experience of some person, but not in the very language in which it is here recorded." [1]

The significance of the HISTORICAL BOOKS of the Old Testament is naturally determined for Luther by his estimate of the Old Testament historical narratives in general. To these books themselves he makes remarkably few references. It is, comparatively speaking, but quite infrequently that he looks to them even for illustrations of holy living, or of providential dealings, such as he is accustomed to introduce in his practical writings. The Old Testament characters to whom he chiefly refers are Abraham and the other patriarchs, especially Jacob, Moses and David; from the period following the Pentateuch, it is principally David, and the materials for his life are drawn, to some extent, from the Books of Samuel, but mainly from the Psalms. The *Book of Kings* he describes in the *Tischreden* as the register of the Jews, in which the history of their kings is regularly recorded; and he regards it as more trustworthy than the Chronicles.[2] Yet all the books, with their significant narratives, continue to retain for him their place in the canon. He finds even in the *Judges* "excellent heroes and saviors." Derogatory utterances concerning the apocryphal books of Ezra do not affect the canonical Hebrew book of that name. It is only in regard to *Esther* that he expresses a different and, indeed, very decided judgment. He blames Erasmus severely for placing the canonical books of Proverbs and the Song of Solomon on the same level as the two (apocryphal) Books of Ezra, Judith, Susanna and Esther, adding in regard to the last named: "which, although they have it in the canon, deserves beyond all the others to be kept out of the canon." [3] Although we find this opinion positively expressed in only one passage (in the treatise, *De servo arbitrio*), yet the perfect silence as to Esther preserved in his other writings fully accords with it. His judgment was doubtless based upon the contents of the book. In one passage, he makes brief incidental comment upon the books of Ezra (Hebrew) and Nehemiah, as follows: "It is wonderful how he Estherizes and Mordecai-izes." [4]

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 25 sqq.; xxxix, 45 sqq.; ix, 366. Tischr., iii, 130; iv, 405.
[2] Tischr., iv, 405. [3] Jena, iii, 388. [4] Jena, iv, 726 b (A. D. 1541).

The general severance of the APOCRYPHAL BOOKS from the Scriptures of the Hebrew canon was based upon the same principle which had led the Reformer at an earlier period to reject 2 Maccabees,[1] and upon his judgment as to their internal character. In his German Bible of 1534, they appeared as an appendix to the Old Testament, with the explanation: "These are books which are not considered equal to the Sacred Scriptures, but which are yet good and useful to read." That he did not wish to have them left out of the published volumes of the Bible, is to be attributed partly to the good material which he still recognized in them; yet we cannot but feel that he was influenced here also to some extent by the gradation in value and authority which he so distinctly recognized even among the canonical books themselves. How far, we must inquire, was a clear line of discrimination yet possible for him between the least valuable books of Scripture and the best of the Apocrypha in regard to the one chief feature which must here prove decisive, *i. e.*, the value and significance of their contents?

Luther finds great differences, also, among the apocryphal books. He says that *1 Maccabees* is, in style and language, almost like the other books of the Sacred Scriptures, and would not be unworthy to be included among them, since it is very necessary and useful in elucidating the prophet Daniel. He expounds the historical contents of the book in the same practical, religious way as those of the historcal books of the canon. Among the doctrinal books, his characterization of *Sirach* reminds us at once of the opinion expressed as to the writings of Solomon, especially the Proverbs. It aims, he declares, to make the citizen, or head of the household, God-fearing, pious and prudent, correct in his conduct toward God, the divine Word, his parents, wife, children, property, neighbors and all men. In the *Tischreden*, indeed, he observes that Sirach is no prophet, and neither teaches nor knows anything about Christ. The internal relationship with the books of Solomon, especially with Ecclesiastes, is indicated also by the supposition of the *Tischreden*, that the latter may also have been arranged by Sirach.[2] In the *Book of Wisdom* Luther finds also much that is good and worth reading, yet it appears to him to Judaize very strongly, may have been the work of Philo,

[1] Vol. I., p. 317.

[2] Supra, p. 238 note.

and has been over-estimated in the Romish Church. From a comparison of the *Book of Judith* with the historical books of the canon, he concludes that the former is not historical, but an allegorical fiction. He regards it, nevertheless, as an excellent spiritual composition written by a holy and spiritually-minded man. The allegory he finds similar to that of the Song of Solomon. If it were historical, he says, it might properly have a place in the Bible. Very appreciative, too, are the comments of Luther upon the sections of Esther and Daniel not found in the Hebrew text—strikingly so, when compared with his estimate of the canonical Book of Esther, and yet not strangely, when we consider the religious and prayerful spirit pervading the former, but lacking in the latter. The narratives of *Susanna*, *Bel* and *Habakkuk* he regards as further fictions. Of *Tobias* the same may be said, he declares, as of Judith. It is a fiction—an excellent comedy, whereas Judith is a tragedy. In the *Tischreden*, however, he agrees with Justas Jonas, who has been criticising Tobias, that the devil cannot be driven away so easily as the book represents. Of the "*good Baruch*," on the other hand, Luther thinks very little. Of *2 Maccabees* he says, that it is, on the ground of its contents, rightly excluded from the canon. He is willing to "allow it to go along with the others," only because it nevertheless contains some good pieces. The so-called *Third and Fourth Books of Ezra* he did not include at all among the books "useful for reading." Neither were these books acknowledged as canonical by the Council of Trent, although they have been still circulated in the Roman Catholic Church as an appendix to the Vulgate. The Fourth appears in Luther's time to have been held in particularly high esteem by the Anabaptists on account of its prophecies.[1]

It is evident from the foregoing that, in Luther's view, Christ is to be always regarded as the central point, even in the Old Testament Scriptures, and that the latter already contain the most exalted and profound testimonies concerning Him. But the NEW TESTAMENT is superior to the Old, not only upon the ground that the former announces Christ as having already come, and ear-

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 104 sq., 107 sq., 101 sq., 93 sqq., 98 sqq., 103. Tischr., iv, 402 sqq. Op. Ex., ii, 302. In Tischr., iv, 402 (The Third Book of Esdras I cast into the Elbe), Aurifaber and Walch erroneously print "Esther" instead of "Esdras."

nestly offers Him to all as the Saviour; but because, whilst the Gospel message appears in the Old Testament only in single promises and assurances of grace, in the midst of the prevalent presentation of the Law, here "grace and peace through the forgiveness of sins in Christ" have become the special and peculiar doctrine, although, indeed, laws and commandments are here, too, incidentally given. And, however deeply some special passages in the Old Testament, as, for example, Isa. liii., revealed the very essence of the Gospel, it is only in the New Testament that the full, clear light shines everywhere. Although everything essential was already contained in the former, it is only in the latter that it is brought out into clear light. The Old Testament is, as it were, a last will and testament of Christ, which can only now be properly read, and which is now to be everywhere made known. From the New Testament we must look back to those passages in the Old upon which the discourses of the former are based, and to which they refer. On the other hand, it is only from the point of view of the manifested Christ that we are to interpret Moses and the prophets, for whose utterances He is as the centre to the circle.[1]

Moreover, everything which the apostles have written constitutes but *One Gospel.* We cannot, with strict propriety, speak of "four gospels." The term "Gospel" expresses for Luther the conception, further, of a living, public proclamation, sounding abroad through the whole world—not so much a word recorded in books and printed letters, but rather a spoken word. Therefore Christ Himself did not write. That it should have been found necessary to write books manifests, in itself, a great deviation from the original method, and an infirmity of spirit. It is evident that a confinement in the Letter does not, to the mind of Luther, accord with the free spiritual character and agency of the essentially living and actively-operating Word of salvation. That the Old Testament announcement of Christ was committed to writing was to be accounted for by the fact, that it "only pointed to the future Christ," and was to be compared to a last will and testament not yet completed. Now that Christ has come, He is to be vividly and publicly preached. Yet it was necessary, he adds, that books should be written; for, as false

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 9; x, 164; xlvi, 348.

teachers arose, it was found needful at last to resort to the preparation of written testimonies, in order to furnish pasture for the sheep of the flock, in which they might themselves find nourishment, even though their shepherds should become wolves. Thus Paul wrote down what he had previously, and no doubt in much fuller form, orally taught. Thus the apostles in general sought to preserve the New Testament securely and certainly, as in a sacred ark.[1]

Among the books of the New Testament we find Luther again discriminating, in view of their respective relations to the heart and centre of the Gospel. The precedence was, in harmony with his conception of saving truth, and with the course of his own spiritual development as well, accorded to the Epistles of St. Paul. They not only testify directly of Christ, but they carry the special message, that it is *only* in Him that salvation can be secured through faith. He prefers particularly the *Epistles to the Romans, Galatians* and *Ephesians*—more specifically, the two first named, and, of these two, that to the *Romans*. From *Romans* and *Galatians* we should decide all questions, and in their light interpret dark passages in other portions of Scripture. The real principal part of the New Testament, and the very purest (exhibition of the) Gospel, is the Epistle to the Romans. He praises, likewise, the Gospel of St. John, with which he would assign a place of equal dignity to the First Epistle of St. John on account of its exalted testimony concerning the Son of God, concerning God the Father, to whom it attributes all things and with whom it represents the Son as having all things in common, and concerning man's own inability and the mercy of God manifested in Christ. Among the four Gospels, he regards it as the one tender and real chief Gospel. Special prominence is given, further, together with the writings of Paul and John, to the First Epistle of St. Peter. He assigns a lower position to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, inasmuch as they do not lay as much stress as the books above named upon the lofty articles concerning the grace which we possess in Christ and concerning faith in Him, but treat more of the miracles of Christ and of the works and fruits of faith. St John remains thus, for Luther, the foremost and chief of the Evangelists. Yet the significance

[1] Erl. Ed., li, 326; x, 16, 366 sq.; lii, 29; xxii, 183.

which attaches to the others likewise, with the emphasis laid by them upon works, is also recognized—more fully in the later than in the earlier writings of the Reformer. This phase of the truth he admits must also not be overlooked, and in this he acknowledges that the other Evangelists excel John—only we must bear in mind, that the works must always be attributed to faith and proceed from it. The ACTS OF THE APOSTLES is also held in peculiarly high esteem by Luther, on account of the testimony which it bears to the chief article of Christian doctrine, that of justification by faith. He regards it as the constant aim of this book to teach that the Holy Spirit comes, not from the Law, but from the hearing of the Gospel.[1]

The *other books* of the New Testament do not belong to the so-called "*Homologoumenoi*" of Eusebius, upon whose representations as to the testimony of the early ages in behalf of the respective books Luther has relied. Nevertheless, he entertains no doubts concerning the three so-called *Antilegomenoi*, 1 JOHN, 2 JOHN AND 2 PETER. In the German Bible he allowed them to stand next to the first Epistles of John and Peter respectively, and thus to precede the Epistles to the Hebrews, those of James and Jude, and the Revelation. The four books last named he introduces, in his *Preface of the Year 1522*, with the words: "Thus far we have had the proper and certain chief books of the New Testament; but the four books which follow had in ancient times a different repute." He does not therefore at all mean to indicate that he does not count 1 John, 2 John and 2 Peter as properly belonging among the principal books, or that he allows them to retain their place only because he does not wish to sever them from the earlier epistles of the same apostles. He published a commentary, also, upon the Second Epistle of Peter without even making mention of the uncertainty of the ancient witnesses concerning the authorship. The explanation of his treatment of these books is doubtless to be found in the fact that the lack of external testimony in their behalf appeared to him as of little moment when compared with the internal worth which he ascribed to them; whilst, at the same time, he found in them no such indications of later and non-apostolic authorship as in

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 115. Briefe, vi, 424. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 119, 153. Briefe, i, 224. Erl. Ed., li, 326 sq.; xliii, 81: xlvii, 372; lxiii, 116. Comm. ad. Gal., i, 296 sqq.

the Epistle to the Hebrews and that of Jude. In the *Second and Third Epistles of John* he sees illustrations of love and faith, and recognizes also in them, as in the *First Epistle*, a truly apostolic spirit. The *Second Epistle of Peter* he does not, indeed, acknowledge, as he does the first, as among the noblest books, and refers to it much less frequently than to the latter. It appears to him, however, to display the same strictly evangelical purpose which he had always had in view in his own teaching, *i. e.*, it guards against the two opposite errors—urging that the power to make men pious and acceptable to God, which belongs only to faith, be not attributed to works, and that no one imagine that faith can exist without good works. In commenting, indeed, upon one passage of the epistle (iii. 15, 16), he remarks that, inasmuch as this indicates that the letter was written long after those of Paul, it might be inferred that its author was not St. Peter; but he himself does not draw such inference. He even says in regard to a doctrinal statement of the epistle, namely, that the Lord desires not that any should perish, etc. (iii. 9), that it might awaken suspicion as to the apostolic origin of the book; and he himself thinks that Peter has here not quite maintained the standard of the apostolic spirit. His objection (expressed in 1524) was based upon his doctrine, developed especially in his controversy with Erasmus, concerning the grace of God and His gracious decree, against which the Papists, referring to this passage and 1 Tim. ii. 4, maintained, that our obedience to the will of God does not, after all, depend upon God, but upon us.[1] Nevertheless, he does not on this account discredit the apostolic origin of the epistle, but thinks that the apostle in this passage, in which he is writing not of faith but of love, has, as is the nature of love, stooped to the level of his neighbor, the future reader of his epistle. That Luther does not further examine the question as to the authorship of these three epistles, *i. e.*, their human composers, is but a further and characteristic evidence of the nature of his critical principles as applied to the canon.[2]

The four remaining books, as we have seen from the preface above cited, are not regarded by Luther as belonging properly to the scriptural canon. So strongly did he feel it to be his duty

[1] Cf. Erl. Ed., li, 317.

[2] Erl. Ed., xliii, 154; lii, 213 sqq.; li, 327; xliii, 115, 152; lii, 271.

to call the attention of all readers of the Scriptures to the difference between the two classes of books, that he even altered in the German Bible the outward order of the books which had become universally prevalent in the Church, placing the Epistle to the Hebrews and that of James further back. We have already noticed how candidly he expressed, even in sermons, his opinion of the Epistle of James. His opinion as to the authorship of the EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS appears at first to have been not definitely settled. Although he, in a *Christmas Sermon in the Church Postils*, already pronounces as probably correct the view of a non-apostolic origin of this book, and mentions that some ascribe it to Luke and some to Apollos, yet, in another of the *Christmas Sermons*, and in a publication of A. D. 1523, he cites the epistle without further comment as a letter of Paul. But in the course of time he becomes, not more reserved, but more positive, in his opinion. He says of Apollos, in a *Sermon of A. D. 1537*: "The Epistle to the Hebrews is probably his"; and, still later: "The author of the epistle, whoever it is, whether Paul or, as *I think*, Apollos." In quoting from the epistle, he commonly speaks merely of "the author of the epistle", or of the "master of this Scripture" (*Meister der Schrift*).[1]

But while he thus, in forming his estimate of the four books in question, takes into view, along with the testimony of ancient writers as to their authorship, also both the external historical indications which they contain and the internal character of their teachings, his opinion upon the last named point, which is for him the one of greatest moment, is by no means in every instance the same.

In this respect, he esteemed the Epistle to the Hebrews much more highly than the other three. In his *Preface of A. D. 1522*, indeed, he instances against it the "hard knot," that in chapters vi. and x. repentance is absolutely denied for sins committed after baptism, as also the declaration in xi. 17 concerning Esau. These sound to him as contradictions of the Evangelists and Paul; and he doubts whether the language will bear any other interpretation than that which is apparent. Yet, despite this, he recognizes in the book the very model of an excellent epistle, which treats in a masterful way of the priesthood of Christ, and thus of the chief article of our faith. At a later day, he not only con-

[1] Erl. Ed., vii, 181; x, 174; xxii, 133; xviii, 38. Op. Ex., xi 130; l, 335; iii, 298. Erl. Ed., xi, 177.

tinues to extol the epistle most highly on this account; but he then finds the passages alluded to, if the text be but rightly understood, in harmony with the evangelical doctrine of salvation.[1] From that time forward, accordingly, his only reasons for assigning a lower position to this epistle than to the other books of the New Testament were, that it had in earlier times "a different repute" in a portion of the Church, and that it would seem, from internal evidences, such as chap. ii., v. 3, to have been composed by a later disciple of the apostle.

Luther never changed, however, his unfavorable opinion of the teachings of the EPISTLE OF JAMES, touching the doctrine of justification. According to the *Tischreden*, he binds himself to put his cap upon the head of any man who can harmonize the doctrine of James on this subject with that of Paul, and to take the place of a fool in comparison.[2] Yet, at the same time, even in the *Preface of A. D. 1522*, he regards the epistle as worthy of praise, because it sets up no doctrine of men, but lays great stress on the commandment of God. But, for himself, he cannot and will not—as he declares, though in a somewhat milder tone, even in the later editions of the *Preface*—place it among the real chief books of the Bible. He will not, however, hinder others from placing it wherever they wish, since it contains many good utterances upon other points. He attributes the contradiction of Paul's teaching to an intellectual inferiority upon the part of the author, who wished to caution those who rely upon faith without works, but, in making the attempt, did not rise to the requirement of the task.

In regard to the EPISTLE OF JUDE, Luther declared in 1521, that it had formerly appeared to him unprofitable, but that he had come to see that, taken from the Epistle of Peter, it was intended to bear witness against the Pope (the antichristian intruders who were to appear). In the *Preface of A. D. 1522*, he argues, further, in the way already indicated,[3] that it does not come from an apostle. He speaks in a similar way also in his exposition of the book in 1524. In the *Church Postils*, he says of it and the Epistle of James, that they are "not writings of the apostles." But nevertheless—evidently just on

[1] Erl. Ed., xl, 139; xliv, 126. Comm. ad Gal., i, 287. Op. Ex., vii, 70.
[2] Tischr., iv, 399.
[3] Supra, p. 230.

account of the testimony which he was able to deduce from them against the prevalent abuses under the Papacy—he considered them of sufficient importance to justify him in specially "preaching and expounding" them together with the Second Epistle of Peter. He does not, in these expositions, adopt as his own the suspicions in regard to verses 9, 14 and 15, which led some of the early Fathers to reject the book. In regard to verse 9, he expresses no opinion. To the argument against verses 14 and 15, that they contain a statement in regard to Enoch which occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures, he replies that neither do the names of Jannes and Jambres, found in 2 Tim. iii. 8, occur anywhere else in the Scriptures. He says: "Be it as it may, we let the matter go." At all events, God has from the beginning of the world permitted some men to proclaim His Word, and Father Enoch doubtless labored in that way. He afterwards, in the *Commentary upon Genesis*, says more definitely of Jude, that he does not know whence he derived this saying; probably it had been preserved in the memory of the race, or some traditions of the patriarchs may have been recorded. He here names the apostle Jude as the author, without further comment. We may safely see in this favorable attitude of Luther toward the Epistle of Jude another illustration of the preponderating importance which he is accustomed to attach, in his criticism of the books of the Bible, to the value of their contents.[1]

Luther expresses, in A. D. 1522, a very unfavorable opinion of the REVELATION OF ST. JOHN, basing it, again, upon the internal character of the book, with reference, however, also to the fact that many of the Fathers likewise rejected it. We have already seen that he regarded the New Testament as essentially a free and open proclamation of Christ. In full harmony with this, we now find his opinion of the Apocalypse. It fits, he declares, the apostolic office, to speak and prophesy of Christ in clear, plain language, as Peter, Paul and Christ Himself have done in the Gospel. This book, on the contrary—in contrast with the manner of the prophets even in the Old Testament, to say nothing of the New — deals throughout so entirely in visions and pictures, that he is almost compelled to class it with the

[1] Jena, ii, 390 b. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 158; lii, 272 sq.; x, 166; lii, 277, 281. Op. Ex., ii, 96.

Fourth Book of Ezra and cannot discover any evidence that it was indited by the Holy Spirit. Besides, it is enough for him, that Christ is not taught nor recognized in the book. He is, therefore, unable to consider it apostolic or prophetic. Yet he does not desire to bind others to his opinion. He merely expresses his own feelings in the matter. His mind cannot adapt itself to this book. In the same year, he appeals, in support of the priesthood of believers, to Rev. xx. 6, with the remark that the book is, indeed, "not of such a character as to be available in controversy"—"in the estimation of the ancients not of full authority in controversy." In a letter of A. D. 1523, he calls it "an obscure and uncertain book." The sermon of the *Church Postils* upon the *Second Sunday in Epiphany* contains, under Rom. xii. 6, the remark (with which may be compared the expression above cited [p. 235] concerning the utterances of the Old Testament prophets): Paul does not here place a high estimate upon the foretelling of future events, such as we find in the prophecies of Lichtenberger, the Abbot Joachim, and almost the whole of the Apocalypse. How derogatory to the character of the Apocalypse is this association may be inferred especially from the Reformer's opinion of Lichtenberger elsewhere expressed.[1]

But, despite the low estimate placed upon the book in general, Luther had, in his answer to Catharinus[2] maintained the fulfilment of some of its most significant symbolical representations in the papal theology. At a later period, he labored more diligently to understand the prophecies of the volume, and, despite all the uncertainty attaching to them, to turn them to good account. He speaks with cordial appreciation of its portraiture of the kingdom of Christ at large, which, despite all the antagonism and assaults of hell, is to remain in possession of the divine promise. The most beautiful of its figures seems to him to be that of the virgin and the dragon, which he embodied in his hymn: "*Sie ist mir lieb, die werthe Magd.*" He now no longer compares the Apocalypse with the prophecies of a Lichtenberger, but with those uttered by the holy apostles, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, after the ascension of Christ; and the passage above cited is left out of the later edition of the *Church Postils*. Still, *Revelations* always remained for him a

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 250 sqq., 257.

[2] Vol. I., p. 207.

book of "dark words and figures"—a "very obscure book" (*liber obscurior*). Nor did he fail to observe how attractive it, together with the *Fourth Book of Ezra*, proved to be to the fanatical sects. The attitude which he now assumed toward the book is clearly revealed in the *Preface* which he substitutes for that of A. D. 1522. He acknowledges, on the one hand, that holy men do sometimes receive from the Holy Spirit prophetic revelations in bare pictures and figures, without any word or explanation, as Peter, quoting from Joel, speaks in Acts ii. 17 of visions and dreams. But he maintains, on the other hand, that without reliable interpretation they cannot prove beneficial or fruitful. As, therefore, no certain interpretation has yet been given of the Apocalypse, he has hitherto passed it by, especially as some of the Fathers did not consider it as apostolic in origin. For himself, he can do no more than let the question rest in uncertainty. Nevertheless, he not only does not desire to hinder any one else from accepting it as genuine, but he himself still seeks to find explanations of its prophecies in the history of the Church, in the ancient heresies, in the Roman Empire, the Romish Church, etc. Thus, says he, we can still make use of the book—for consolation and warning. Those who are scandalized at the abuses in the Christian world ought to read this book and learn to look upon such things with other eyes than those of reason. It will teach us to hold firmly the article of the Creed: "I believe in a holy Christian Church." To this extent, Luther's opinion of the book was changed—but not the general principles of his biblical criticism.[1]

4. *Inspiration of the Sacred Writers.*

BIBLE GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT—PRIMARY INSPIRATION OF ORAL DELIVERANCES—HUMAN AGENCY—DISPARAGEMENT OF PORTIONS OF SACRED BOOKS.

We have, in the above, gleaned the most important utterances of Luther touching the Scriptures at large and touching separate portions of the volume. But at what conclusion shall we arrive,

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 169 sq.; viii, 36. Jena, ii, 468. Briefe, ii, 415. Erl. Ed., viii, 22. Op. Ex., xx, 152, 156 sq. Erl. Ed., lvi, 359 (cf. Luther's Geistliche Lieder von Ph. Wackernagel, p. 164). Erl. Ed., l, 85. Op. Ex., ii, 302. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 158 sqq.

if it be now inquired, in view of all that has been said: In what sense can the Bible be called "a book given to the Church *by the Holy Spirit*," or, What does Luther understand precisely when speaking of the agency of the Holy Spirit? In reply to these questions, we are not able to produce any more precise explanations or definitions of Luther as to the NATURE AND FORM OF INSPIRATION. Very important materials, however, for the construction of a doctrine of inspiration in accordance with his peculiar view of the subject have been furnished by the foregoing review.

Only upon the view of such an inspiration by the Holy Spirit as was peculiar to the Scriptures alone, in contradistinction from the productions of even the most pious and holy Christians of post-apostolic ages, could rest the lofty estimate which Luther entertained of the Bible as compared with the best of other books —only upon the conviction that its contents were of such a character as to make it, for all time, the One source of all truth.[1] At this point, our attention is again fixed, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, especially upon Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. Luther confessed at the close of his life that he was still only an A B C scholar in the books of Moses, which no one had yet thoroughly learned to understand, and whose contents were deeper than any abyss; and the writings of Moses have this character, because they are "a writing of the Holy Spirit," and because the Holy Spirit is the "author of the book" (*libri autor*). The prophets, Luther asserts, are "also far superior to us" in their preaching of Christ, and they have received their message, as we have seen above, immediately from the Holy Spirit. The Psalter not only contains testimonies to Christ of which the same may be said; but for every prayer which a devout heart can wish to utter there may here be found words so "exact and precious that all men combined could not have invented such appropriate measure, language or thought." Compared with it and the Lord's Prayer, our own poor attempts at prayer must seem cold, heartless and weak. For an explanation of this characteristic of the Psalms, we must look again to the agency of the Holy Spirit in the work of the Psalmists. To the apostles, finally, Christ Himself gave the promise of the Holy Spirit, who should

[1] Cf. supra, p. 228.

teach them all things. They drew, as Luther often said, from the fountain of the Old Testament; but even that which was derived from this source for their testimony to Christ they recognized only through the revealing agency of the Holy Spirit. He himself, he declares, could, with the help of the same Spirit, make as good a New Testament out of Moses, the Psalter and Isaiah, as that which the apostles have written. But just because we do not enjoy such full and powerful aid from the Holy Spirit, we must *learn* from them, and drink out of their well. The Scriptures at large Luther calls directly "the Spirit's own writing" —in contrast with writings of the Fathers, from which, upon the theory of the Papists, the meaning of the Spirit in the Scripture must be learned.[1]

But we dare not interpret such expressions of Luther as indicating that it was at all his idea, that the Holy Scriptures are the result of a uniform divine inspiration, without the intervention of the human individuality and intellectual activity of their authors, or without any distinction between the various and diverse portions of the Bible.

It is to be observed, first of all, that, in the view of Luther, the agency of the Holy Spirit in the production of the written Word was in nowise more complete than that which He exercised in the *Oral Deliverances* of His human instruments. In the case of the New Testament heralds of the Gospel, we would be compelled, as he teaches, to see in their witnessing through the written Word and Letter a form of activity beneath the dignity of the Spirit, if the special need of the Church had not required it.[2] In the case of the prophets, Luther ascribes the agency of the Spirit, in the first instance, entirely to the oral deliverances, and he supposes that these were, for the most part, afterwards committed to writing by other persons, of whose special endowment by the Spirit he says nothing.

That the Spirit did not exert His energy with equal strength and fullness in all the recipients of the Word and authors of Sacred Scriptures, follows by necessity from the differences observed in the value of their writings.

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 378. Op. Ex., i, 4; vii, 313. Erl. Ed., xviii, 187; lxiii, 34; xii, 300 sqq; xi, 248; xxvii, 244.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 242.

Our attention is directed to the *Co-operative Human Agency*, even in the cases of the chief prophets and apostles, by the use which they make of the sacred Mosaic and prophetical writings already at hand, and the study to which especially the prophets devoted themselves, and in which they afford patterns for our imitation. It is no contradiction of this position to hold, as did Luther, that what was thus derived by them from earlier writings was revealed to their minds only through a specially clear and complete illumination by the Holy Spirit. The same is to be said even of the very first scriptural writer, Moses, from whom all the others derived so much. It was God who, through him, established the Law and its outward ordinances. Yet, at the same time, Luther declares: We may even say that Moses took the Ten Commandments, which had been from the very beginning imprinted upon the hearts of men, from the fathers, as Jesus Himself says, in John vii. 21, of circumcision. He derived his judicial ordinances largely (*plenaque*) from more ancient customs, and he may have adopted many things from the practice of surrounding nations.[1]

We are led still further by observing the character of the highly-lauded Psalter, as in it the very heart of the believer and its inmost trials are revealed. Luther lays special emphasis upon the fact that the inward and subjective experiences of which its writers treat, and the earnestness with which they call upon God and testify of Him, are analogous to the experiences of God's saints in all ages. The special agency of the Spirit is manifest only in the peculiar fervency and power of their language (*Wort*), in which they are unapproachable.

In the writings of Solomon, the chief stress is laid, so far as we can see, upon the pious human reflection of the king, walking in faith, and gaining wide experience of the ways of providence.

But how stands the case with the Historical Books of the Old Testament? As far as the utterances of Luther upon the subject go, they fully justify the inquiry, whether the sacred writers were not perhaps only impelled to their task, guided in their contemplation of the great divine realities, and directed in the choice and arrangement of their materials—but left in other respects to go about their work in precisely the same way as other historians;

[1] Erl. Ed., ix, 253 sq. Op. Ex., iv, 259 sq.

and whether, consequently, their writings are not entitled to a place in the book which "God, the Holy Ghost, has given to the Church" only in view of their historical contents and such an influence of the Holy Spirit upon the manner of their presentation as above indicated. The Book of Esther, for example, could, consistently with his expressed opinion as to its character, have been allowed to stand among the canonical books as presenting a further record of the history of the people of God—only, thus, on account of its contents, and not on account of any recognized agency of the Spirit in its actual composition. Its historical character Luther never called in question.[1]

In regard to the books of the New Testament, we need but recall the *gradation* from a Paul or John, who themselves made use of the earlier books in pious human reflection, to the other Evangelists, and, finally, to James. Nor must we overlook the displacement of the Epistle to the Hebrews on the ground that it was not composed by an apostle. Luther felt himself at liberty to allow its author, since he was not an apostle, only a lower degree of authority, and hence, also, doubtless but an inferior measure of spiritual inspiration; whilst he by no means felt himself compelled on this account to exclude the book from the canon. In connection with the New Testament, however, we must take into special consideration those utterances of Luther according to which different portions of one and the same book are represented as related in different ways to the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Even within the limits of particular books—and that, in the case of those to which he assigns the highest position—Luther does not attribute all utterances equally to the higher revelation.

As this fact is of great importance in assisting us to form a more correct judgment as to the authority which he would attribute to the *contents* of a book in view of the various elements which it contains, so also it leads to further conclusions as to the co-operation of the divine and human factors in the *origination* of the written Word.

The most striking passages in this respect are the two already quoted in regard to the prophets, which are, indeed, only disconnected expressions, but which are publicly made without the least

[1] Cf. the historical use to which he applies this book in his *Supputatio annorum mundi*, Jena, iv, 726.

hesitancy; namely, that concerning hay and stubble even in such excellent teachers, and that concerning secular prophecies, in which even they have been mistaken.[1]

A peculiar interest, however, attaches to the deliverances of the Reformer in regard to passages of Scripture which appear to be *mutually contradictory*. We must here carefully discriminate between scriptural presentations of saving truth, which constitute for Luther the substance of Christian belief, and the narratives of external historical events. Touching the former, it is to Luther inconceivable that there should be any contradiction whatsoever, or any error, in the canonical Scriptures whose origin is to be traced to the Holy Spirit. It is only in the Epistle of James that he finds anything of the kind, and it is just on account of this that he so positively excludes that Epistle from the list of the chief books. If he, in some other connections, when arguing with opponents who appeal to scriptural passages in support of work-righteousness, exalts the One Christ who is Lord over the whole Scriptures—and if he says: "If the adversaries have urged Scripture against Christ, we urge Christ against Scripture"—he by no means designs thereby to acknowledge that the passages referred to are really at variance with the true doctrine, but, on the contrary, to assert that they, too, should, can and must be interpreted in harmony with the central point of all truth. When supposing, for the sake of argument, that his opponents should produce passages whose difficulties he could not solve, he at once adds: "although this is impossible for them."[2]

The case is different with statements of the second character. Here, too, indeed, he labors with conscientious assiduity and acumen to remove the difficulties. Of this, many examples may be found in the discussion of the chronological data of Genesis in his commentary upon that book, and particularly in his *Supputatio annorum mundi*, in which he rebukes those who are so ready to cry: "Here is an error." But even apparent contradictions in the records of the Evangelists, such as those in regard to the time of the purification of the temple and the place in which Peter's denial occurred, occasion him no great concern. In regard to the latter case, he says that John here makes confusion, and may not have strictly observed the order of events. How-

[1] Supra, p. 235. [2] Jena, i, 539 b sq. Comm. ad Gal., i, 387.

ever, he explains, no great importance attaches to such questions. He will not attempt to solve the difficulty. If we have the chief article of faith, *i. e.*, that Christ, the Son of God, has died for us, we will not be left in great distress, even though we cannot answer all other questions that may be asked. Even if we should, in violation of the order given by John, locate Peter's denial entirely in the house of Caiaphas, that will not take us either to heaven or to hell. He sees a departure from the proper order also, for example, in the eschatological discourses of Matt. xxiv. and Mark, as compared with those given by Luke. The two former have combined and commingled different discourses. In considering other difficulties, he supposes a corruption by a copyist, so that we no longer possess—not, at least, in our text—the original and historically-correct Word: as, for example, in the number of years given in Acts xiii. 20 and in the omission of Jakim, in Matt. i. 11. The chronological difficulties of Old Testament history after the time of Elijah and Elisha lead him to remark that, as the kingdom was at that time full of confusion, so also the record of the period is "*confusissima*." Nor did he hesitate, finally, to acknowledge even *patent errors*, finding such even upon the lips of a man who has just been declared full of the Holy Ghost as he spake, namely, Stephen. According to Stephen, Acts vii. 2, Abraham was called while still in Mesopotamia; according to Moses, not until his arrival in Haran. Luther is well aware that it is customary to suppose a double call, but he does not seek to escape the difficulty in that way. He supposes, on the contrary, that it went with Stephen as it so often does with us when we make an incidental allusion without stopping to consider all the related circumstances, whereas Moses writes as a historian. He finds another error in the 14th verse of the same chapter, in which Stephen, following the Alexandrian version of the Old Testament, reports 75 souls instead of the 70 of the Hebrew text (Gen. xlvi. 27). He is in doubt as to whether the former figure crept into the Alexandrian text through the carelessness of the translator or that of the copyist, but he says candidly that Stephen derived the erroneous number from that source.[1]

Luther has nowhere more expressly defined the limitations

[1] Op. Ex., iii, 71. Erl. Ed., l, 308 sqq., 325; xlvi, 174; xiv, 319, 324. Jena, iv, 718; cf. Briefe, v, 489. Jena, iv, 724 b, 749. Op. Ex., iii, 121; cf. Briefe, ii, 489, and Jena, iv, 749 b. Op. Ex., xi, 19.

within which such errors are possible in the case of even the most exalted instruments of the Holy Spirit and in the canonical Scriptures. Nor does he think it necessary to make any further attempt to allay the fears which might thereby be awakened, lest the very substance of saving truth be rendered uncertain. His attitude upon these questions can, however, not cause us any perplexity, if we but consider what we have already had occasion to observe in regard to the origin and the central point of his own faith and the fixed and sure connection therewith of his entire doctrinal system.

Nor can it appear to us to involve any real contradiction, that he who here expresses his mind so freely as to the reliability of books and their contents, should, under other circumstances, as especially in the sacramental controversy, cling so stubbornly to the very letter of the Scriptures. What has been said of the difference between various books of the Bible, and of subordinate statements concerning external matters, etc., could have no application to the words employed in the institution of the Lord's Supper. Here, on the contrary, it remains, for him, beyond all controversy that the Lord and Master Himself speaks, and that He desires to embrace in these very words the substance of the true revelation of salvation. The relation of his attitude here to the freedom of his criticism elsewhere can therefore awaken no surprise. The only real question which may arise is, why Luther did not venture to *interpret* in any other way these words which his fundamental principles led him to esteem so highly. In explanation of this, we must refer to the reasons assigned by Luther himself as above cited, to the remaining discussion of the present section, and to the fuller treatment of the subject in our final review of the doctrine of the sacraments.

5. *Exposition and Understanding of Scripture.*

SCRIPTURE CLEAR—ILLUMINATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT—INTERPRETATION IN HARMONY WITH CHRIST—ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION —PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

We come now to the important question: How are we to derive the truth from the language of Scripture? We are already familiar with the leading principles of interpretation adopted by

Luther from our study of his publications appearing from A. D. 1520 to A. D. 1525.[1] There are two features of the subject which come into view in connection with his general theory of revelation. God, on the one hand, in making the external, openly-proclaimed Word His organ, has in it presented to us the truth objectively and openly. The Scriptures are not in themselves obscure. We are not, in the first instance, to look for a deeper, hidden meaning instead of the natural and literal sense of the language; but we are to accept the latter as determined by the principles of philology, and we shall never find this natural meaning obscured by any linguistic difficulties in the great scriptural presentations of saving truth. This position Luther maintained against the Papists, who sought to confine the privilege of interpretation to their traditions and tribunals, against the confusion introduced by the allegorizing of the ancient Fathers, and against the fanatical sects. He maintained, however, on the other hand, that the inborn stolidity and blindness of the natural heart militate against the true reception and spiritual understanding of that which is objectively presented in the Word. Such reception and understanding are possible only when the *Holy Spirit* also exerts His *illuminating power* within the individual. He is "the proper Expositor and Revealer." Where He does not open the Scriptures, they cannot be understood, even though they be read, and however clear their doctrines in themselves may be. Since, therefore, the light of the Spirit, under varying times and circumstances, breaks upon the minds of men or is withdrawn from them, Luther can also compare the Scriptures, whose simplicity and clearness he so stoutly maintains, to a winding and deep stream, which cannot be taken and used everywhere and by everybody.[2]

All scriptural truth is, according to Luther, to be understood in the light of the one central point, the centre of the circle. Everything stands out in clear and objective reality as seen in its relation to this centre, Christ; and, on the other hand, it is this same Christ, to whom the hearts of men must be inwardly drawn by the Holy Spirit. We are thus led by the clear scriptural testimony to *Christ, the Centre*, and by the illumination of the

[1] Vol. I., pp. 432 sqq., 503 sqq.

[2] Erl. Ed., iii, 334; xlvii, 76.

supreme Expositor and Interpreter, to apprehend in its entirety the fundamental basis of the Christian faith. And this is the faith in accordance with which thenceforth all separate utterances are to be interpreted. This is what Luther means when he says that we must so expound the Scriptures "that they may harmonize with the doctrines of (the) faith"; and that we should "teach that which accords with faith in Christ." He here, in harmony with the dogmaticians, applies what is said of prophesying in Rom. xii. 7, asserting that Paul there lays down rules to regulate the exposition of the Scriptures.[1] In accordance with this we must understand also the statement above cited concerning an urging of "Christ against Scripture." If any passage of reputed Scripture could not be without violence thus interpreted, he would no longer regard it as truly scriptural. "Scripture is to be understood in harmony with Christ (*pro Christo*)—therefore it must either be capable of reference to Him, or it is not to be considered as true Scripture."[2]

If we look now for further deliverances concerning the *Proper Sense of Scripture*, as opposed to allegorical interpretations, we discover only a further development of the principles already reviewed.[3] The traditional idea of a *four-fold sense* he regards as utterly useless and impious. It mangles the Scriptures and casts a shadow of uncertainty over everything which they contain, and it is then expected that men will resort to the papal chair to learn what is really true. The proper historical sense is for him, on the contrary, the *sensus capitalis*, *legitimus*, *genuinus*, *verus*, *solidus*. He rejects, accordingly, the application of the Pauline conception of "spirit and letter" to the distinctions between the different senses of scriptural language. His explanation of this passage is in harmony with his declarations in controversy with Emser[3] and in the *Sermon on the Second Sunday in Advent, 1516*.[4] The Law without grace, says he—and hence every law—is "letter." The Law has this character, moreover, not in itself, but for us, in so far as it points to the Spirit, which it requires for its fulfilment. This, and not a mystical, anagogical sense, is to be understood by the "spiritual understanding" (*spiritualis intelligentia*). Hence, no

[1] Erl. Ed., xii, 137; xxv, 81.
[2] Jena, i, 539 b.
[3] Vol. I., p. 433 sq.
[4] Ibid., pp. 188, 192.

dogmatic evidence of any kind can ever be deduced from an allegorical interpretation. It was a very difficult thing for him, he confesses, to tear himself loose from the prevalent method of allegorizing; but he has now determined to have no more to do with it. He warns others against the perils connected with it. He hates it, as he himself has had a taste of its bitter fruit.

Yet he would not condemn all use of allegory, for even Christ and the apostles at times employed it. He notes, on the other hand, the limitations under which it may not only be permissible, but may be employed to excellent effect. He lays down the principles, that we must either have scriptural precedent for the allegorical use of the matter in hand, or must be able in some other way to base the allegorical interpretation upon the analogy of firmly-established principles of Scripture, or articles of faith. The historical events which are to be allegorically employed must be, first of all, accepted as actual occurrences. Even then, allegories cannot be used as arguments in discussion. They may, however, serve to clothe in picturesque garb doctrines previously proved and established; and pictures of this kind, like parables, commonly make a powerful impression upon the multitude. They do not belong to the sphere of dialectics, which must do battle, and display the iron blade to the opponent, but to that of rhetoric, which is often sportive and brandishes a wooden sword. Thus, for example, St. Paul, in Gal. iv. 22 sq., after maintaining the doctrine in hand dialectically, and, as it were, with the sword in open combat, adds, for further elucidation and adornment of the subject, the allegory based on the relations of Sarah and Hagar to Abraham, which, on account of its departure from the historical sense of the original narrative, was less available for use in controversy. No distinction is made, in this respect, between allegory and anagogy, etc.

Luther himself, even in his latest writings, makes a free use of allegories. We may regard these, for the greater part, as sportive inventions of the mind. At all events, he never uses them as proofs, but only playfully or ornamentally. It is noticeable that after about A. D. 1525–1528 he does not make nearly so free nor frequent use of them. We may compare, for instance, the earlier sermons of the *Church Postils* with the later sermons of the same work and with those of the *House Postils*, and, particularly, the *Latin Commentary upon Genesis* with the *Sermons* upon the

same book published in 1527. In the *Commentary* referred to, he follows strictly the plan of first fixing the proper and natural sense of every historical record, however trifling and insignificant it may appear to be, and then holding it up for the devout contemplation of his readers in the significance which it may have, in this its historical sense, for the faith and life of the believer. Only after this has been done, does he sometimes add an allegorical interpretation as a kind of appendix.[1]

In respect to the *Right and Duty of the Individual*, with inner reliance upon the impulse and illumination of the Spirit, to derive the truth for himself from the clear Scriptures, and even to maintain it in opposition to the false teachings of the official leaders of the Church, the chief passage in the writings of Luther is his declaration upon the subject in his controversy with Erasmus.[2] The section of the *Church Postils* published A. D. 1527 declares again: "that all Christians have the power and right to judge all doctrines and to separate themselves from false teachers"; for Christ says of His sheep, that they hear His voice, and not the voice of a stranger. Luther knows, indeed, very well, that if we allow men thus to study the Scriptures for themselves, the devil will stir up the spirit of strife and faction, but—"if we seek to depend upon human councils and counsels, we lose the Scriptures altogether and remain, hair and hide, the devil's prey"; and, moreover, the Word of God alone stands fast forever, whilst errors are ever rising beside it and falling again.[3]

6. *Study of the Scriptures.*

INWARD PREPARATION—MYSTICAL IDEAS—INABILITY OF REASON—REGENERATION ENLIGHTENS REASON—SCRIPTURES FURNISH ALL RELIGIOUS TRUTH—HUMAN CONFESSIONS.

The Scriptures are thus the rule according to which Christian

[1] Cf. upon the Subject of Allegorizing, Op. Ex., xvi, 316 sqq. Comm. ad Gal., iii, 344 sqq. Op. Ex., i, 295 sqq. Briefe, ii, 267. Op. Ex., vii, 305 sqq.; ii, 302 sq.; iv, 189 sqq.; vi, 347. Erl. Ed., xvii, 164 sqq. Comm. ad Gal., 244 sqq. It is clear from the above that Luther, in designating Paul's allegory not tenable as an argument (nicht stichhaltig), did not mean to cast any reproach upon the apostle.

[2] Cf. Vol. I., p. 506 sqq.

[3] Erl. Ed., xii, 367; xxx, 19, 21 sq.

doctrine is to be framed—the source whence Christian knowledge is to flow. To every one who desires to attain this knowledge and impart it to others applies what Luther says of the theologian: "Let it be his first care to be a good textualist." To this end there is required, in the first place, an understanding of the *primary sense* of the words of Scripture, and, with this—not, indeed, for every Christian, but, at least, for every proper expositor of Scripture, or "prophet"—an understanding, also, of the languages in which the blade of the Spirit was originally encased as in a scabbard. To such a knowledge of the words, or grammatical proficiency, must be added also a *knowledge of the subjects discussed*, for it is not sufficient to know merely the names of religious verities. It is necessary, for this purpose, to gain a view of the inner relations of the truth presented, and thus, particularly, is a knowledge of the New Testament essential to a proper understanding of the Old. But, as the spiritual blindness of the natural man stands opposed to the clear light of the Word and hinders the true inward appropriation of the latter, it is, above all, requisite that man himself be, with his own free consent, inwardly prepared to receive it *by the influence of the Holy Spirit*. Hence, Luther establishes the three rules for the proper study of the Scriptures: prayer, meditation, temptation (*oratio*, *meditatio*, *tentatio*). We must, first of all, die to our own selfhood, and to visible created things—must return to nothingness (*redigi in nihilum*). This comes to pass when we endure the cross and death. The "negative theology" does not consist in that in which it is located by Dionysius the Areopagite; but in the holy cross and spiritual trials. "The cross alone is our theology." "Theology ought to be, from the beginning to the end, practical. It is by living, yea, by dying, that one becomes a theologian, and not by knowing, reading and speculating." [1]

This terminology calls again to mind the relation of Luther to the theology of *Mysticism*, but, at the same time, sets forth clearly his opposition to the type of Mysticism which had been up to that time widely disseminated in the Roman Catholic Church,

[1] Op. Ex., xviii, 245. Erl. Ed., xxii, 183 sqq. (Cf. statements in regard to the lack of linguistic proficiency among the Bohemians, Ibid., xxviii, 420.) Op. Ex., iv, 36, 41. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 403. (i, 69 sqq.) Op. Ex., xiv, 261, 239; xviii, 302; xx, 15.

and whose aberrations afterwards led to the Fanaticism of the age of the Reformation. The latter falls under the condemnation which he so frequently uttered against "speculations." He demands that all the cogitations of the renewed inner man attach themselves to the objective Word, and draw their support from it. This is already strikingly evident in his profoundly mystical tract, *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*. Nor are we, as the Mystics say, by our own "*actus eliciti*" to cast ourselves into the darkness, and to rise above existence and non-existence to God. Of such he says, in his *Operationes in Psalmos*, published so early as 1519, that he doubts whether they understand themselves. In after years, he avoided the terms which they employed, as being liable to misconstruction. He makes use of one of Tauler's expressions, indeed—"*redigi in nihilum*"—in one of his later writings (the passage above quoted in which the words occur is from the *Operationes*), but immediately adds: Tauler here speaks, indeed, not in scriptural terms, but in a language unknown to the inspired Word.[1]

If we now, with such conception of scriptural revelation, turn to consider the knowledge of God and of divine things to which *Reason* is able by its own power to lead, we shall find that Luther regards the "feeble" knowledge of God thus attainable as not a whit better than no knowledge at all. The real truth is not in it, and against the reception of this reason strives, just as the natural will is in rebellion against the divine. We have, in a former connection, met the assertion of the Reformer, that only the light of Scripture, and not that of reason, can avail in matters of scriptural concern, although he still recognized a certain natural knowledge of God which is within the province of reason. Returning now to the subject, and viewing it in the light of his theory of the authority and interpretation of Scripture, we must bear both of these principles in mind. Reason has still, according to Luther, and that, too, while man is yet in the state of sin, a certain capacity for dealing with affairs of the higher sphere, is able to infer the existence of an eternal divine Being, and has, also, by virtue of the Law written upon the heart, a "legal perception (*cognitionem legalem*), so that it knows what is right or wrong." But, inasmuch as it neither will nor can discover the very essence

[1] Op. Ex., xiv, 261; x, 7.

of divine truth, its feeble knowledge involves not only a lack, but a positive perversion, of the truth. This feature of the subject Luther constantly emphasizes, and we must explain it in this connection more closely. He very frequently asserts that reason is without any knowledge of what God is for us, or of the inmost heart of God in its thoughts concerning us—of those themes, therefore, which constitute the very core of scriptural truth. Reason apprehends not a particle of the knowledge of grace and truth (John i. 14), of the depths of divine mercy, of the unfathomable depths of the divine wisdom and the divine will. The Law written upon the heart gives her only a left-handed knowledge of God. Her knowledge of the Law, likewise, is not the real knowledge of that which God demands of us; for even in so far as she knows the contents of the Law, she still fails to understand it. She does not comprehend that love is the Law, nor does she, finally, at all apprehend the truth, that we are to attain eternal salvation by the will and commandment of God, but, at the very best, seeks to be saved by her own external righteousness. Of all the above she knows nothing at all, and is unwilling to learn, but strives with all her power against the acceptance of such truth. Hence, all that any heathen philosophers have, however deftly, argued concerning God, and His providence, and His government of the world, is, in consequence of their ignorance of the scriptural relation of God in Christ, the Saviour, the greatest non-knowledge of God and simple blasphemy. Even the very particulars which fall within the range of the natural knowledge of God are so far from being thus apprehended in their real character, that Luther says in regard to them, and thus in regard to the entire sphere of religious truth, that reason understands nothing at all about them: "It is not possible to understand even the smallest article of faith by human reason; so that no man on earth has ever been able to catch and grasp a proper idea, or certain knowledge, of God." Not even a spark of the knowledge of God has remained unperverted in man since the Fall. In matters of faith, reason is stone blind, and cannot understand a single letter of divine wisdom. The sphere in which she can really comprehend anything, and in which she is entitled to be heard at all, does not extend beyond things secular, earthly and material. A discrimination may, indeed, be made between the lower and the higher reason (*ratio inferior et*

superior) ; but although, in that case, the former must be regarded as having to do with affairs of the home and the state (*politia*), and the latter with the sphere of religion, it still remains true that, in the last-named sphere, reason can of herself neither accomplish nor see anything, but that we can here only learn and meditate upon that which is revealed in the Word. Therefore, "Just shut your eyes and say: What Christ says must be true, though no man can understand how it can be true!" Just close up and blindfold reason, and give yourself up entirely to that which the Word from heaven reveals! "In theology, so much must be heard, and believed, and established, in the heart. God is truthful, however absurd the things which He declares in His Word may appear to reason." Let him who desires to keep in the right path say, I believe—and not, I conclude, or judge—that this is right or wrong. The ability to comprehend the articles of faith revealed in the Word is purely a gift and grace of the Holy Spirit. Luther declares that he bears this testimony as one who has himself had no little experience in the matter; but it is with special reference to the Sacramentarians that he discusses the subject, and it was the conflict with them which brought out the doctrine into such clear outline.[1]

In regeneration, a *new light* dawns within the soul, the faith awakened by the Holy Spirit. Man lays aside his own light, his own thoughts, his own will. He becomes a new man, who regards everything in a different light, reasons, judges, wills, etc., otherwise than he had done before. Luther designates this a *quenching* of the light of reason; that is, in so far as the latter was perverted—had transcended its appropriate sphere, and sought by itself to find the path to God. At the same time, he describes it also as merely a *change* of the man in his chief endowment, the natural light. Of the light of reason he says (A. D. 1521), that it must be controlled by a spirit illuminated by faith, as by a higher light: and (in the *Tischreden*): Reason, which is before simple darkness, is in the regenerate enlightened and quickened by faith, and is now a glorious instrument of God, strives no longer against faith, but promotes and serves

[1] Supra, p. 218 sq. Erl. Ed., xlvi, 85 sqq.; x, 182; xiv, 144 sq. Op. Ex., ii, 167 sq. Erl. Ed., l, 174. Op. Ex., ii, 268. Erl. Ed., li, 400; xlvi, 291. Op. Ex., i, 234. Erl. Ed., xx, 132 sqq. Op. Ex., xviii, 245. Erl. Ed., xviii, 111 sqq.

it.[1] We find, however, no more precise discussion of the activity thus attributed to reason in the lives of the regenerate. The entire emphasis is constantly laid upon the fact, that to this enlightened reason the material of truth is given only in the Word. There is left, therefore, no sphere for the activity indicated, except in the formal treatment, in thought and speech, of the material thus furnished.

We have several times found Luther demanding that the opinions he was combating be established "by Scripture or reason."[2] Even when first used, as we attempted to show, this language was not intended to imply that the authority of Scripture and the judgments of reason are upon a par, or that the latter can ever be allowed to contradict the former. But it is very significant that in the later years of his life such expressions are no longer employed. But even more extreme in tendency than the above expression is one occurring in the tract, *De votis monasticis*, in which he appeals to the light of reason to prove that a vow is no longer binding when its fulfilment has become impossible.[3] He there says: "The natural reason, that crude light of nature, although it cannot of itself attain to the light and works of God, so that its judgment is fallacious in affirmative, is nevertheless certain in negative, conclusions; for reason does not comprehend what God is, but nevertheless comprehends with the greatest certainty what God is not." Thus he thinks, further, reason does not know what is right before God (*i. e.*, faith), and yet knows very clearly that unbelief, disobedience, etc., is wrong. To say nothing at present of the possibility of maintaining such a distinction, it is evident that the theory here advanced in such general terms might have been employed also by the Sacramentarians; for example, against Luther's doctrine of a God binding Himself to visible signs. Such use of them, indeed, against any doctrine which the Scriptures seemed to him to clearly teach would doubtless have been at any time rejected by Luther; but it is scarcely conceivable that he would in later years under any circumstances have expressed himself in this way.

Luther, in a special dissertation,[4] discusses the question, whether

[1] Erl. Ed., x, 206 sq., 182; xlv, 221. Tischr., ii, 167 sq.; cf. also Vol. I., p. 436 sq. (Erl. Ed., xxvii, 94).

[2] Vol. I., pp. 279, 282, 436 sq.

[3] Jena, ii, 527 b: cf. Vol. I., p. 453.

[4] Jena, i, 567 sq.

a thing can be false in philosophy, which he considers the science of mere reason, and at the same time true in theology, replying decidedly in the affirmative. Thus he says, for example, that the declaration that the Word was made flesh, true in theology, is in philosophy simply impossible and absurd; for, according to the latter, the natural inference would be, that God had become a created substance. According to philosophy, again, we would be compelled to argue: God the Father begets; God the Father is the divine Being (*essentia*): therefore the divine Being begets. The solution of the contradiction involved he finds in the fact, that the conceptions of God, the divine nature, etc., have in theology a force and significance which are different from those attaching to the same terms in philosophy, and which lie beyond the range of philosophical thought and language. When philosophy undertakes to pass judgment upon such propositions, or to draw inferences from them, it has, in his opinion, intruded upon a sphere for the realities of which it has no capacity, and finds its own conceptions and syllogisms much too contracted. In the same way, he proceeds to argue, the same thing does not always hold true in other differing spheres of knowledge. In the doctrine of weights, for example, it would be erroneous to claim that weights could be computed by the point and line of mathematics (point and line, belonging to another sphere, are here not at all applicable). Even in one sphere of philosophy, that may be true which in another sphere of the same science is false. Thus, it is true in the sphere of the earth's atmosphere, that moisture makes moist, but the same statement is false if applied to the (celestial) sphere of fire[1] (*i. e.*, the conception of moisture, with which one division of natural philosophy, or physics, sets out, does not extend to all other divisions). From all of the above he draws the conclusion, that we should leave dialectics and philosophy to their own appropriate spheres, and learn to speak "in new tongues" (according to the new and peculiarly-constituted material furnished us in Christianity, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to comprehend it).

It is not our task at present to inquire critically how we are, upon Luther's theory, to conceive of that very intimate relation which, in view of the unity of the human spirit in general and

[1] Cf. Op. Ex., i, 35.

the identity of that spirit before and after regeneration, must exist between the old, feeble and perverted light whence we derive the natural knowledge of God and the new light; or, further, between the entire capacity (light) for matters of the higher sphere and the "inferior reason." We can only say, in passing, that Luther does not furnish us the desired information upon this interesting point. In regard to the condition of man before regeneration, we must refer the reader to the entire doctrine concerning man in the state of sin and to the connection of the foregoing positions with the utterances of Luther in regard to the human will as enslaved by sin. Particularly worthy of notice, even in what has already fallen under our view, is the intimate connection in which the whole compass of religious knowledge is represented as standing with our personal moral and religious attitude toward God and with the inmost nature of God, *i. e.*, His love, revealing itself to us, and His consequent practical attitude toward us.

It is regarded thus, as we have seen, by Luther as settled once for all that *all religious truth is given us in the Holy Scriptures*. Neither mere reason, nor even a so-called higher light of the Spirit, supposed to be granted to particular believers or the official leaders of the Church, can be permitted to oppose the revealed Word, or to go beyond it. Nevertheless, we have already heard him speak of a progressive development of doctrine, as constantly, and even in his own day, in progress. That which Christ and His apostles have said is to be further elaborated in all ways,[1] and this is to be done by means of that continuous Christian prophesying through the Holy Spirit, whose special office is the exposition of the Scriptures. He acknowledges, also, that it is the privilege and duty of post-apostolic Christianity to epitomize the principal teachings of Scripture in brief confessions, and, when necessary, to employ in doctrinal definitions expressions not themselves found in the Scriptures. He says thus of the ancient symbols, that they are derived from the Bible, and that they embody in a brief summary that which is presented in a discursive form in the Holy Scriptures. There is, however, a noticeable difference between his earlier and later writings in this respect. He was at first, in his zeal for the

[1] Supra, p. 222 sq.

recognition of the simple divine Word, much more averse than afterward to the employment of any dogmatic terminology not derived directly from it. Even he, however, was led to recognize the necessity of such terms for the positive establishment of scriptural truth, especially as against heretics who sought to pervert it; and he then availed himself of those which were already current in the Church. The former disposition is seen, as late as A. D. 1521, in his *Confutatio rationis Latomianae*, in which he zealously maintains the simplicity of the Scriptures, and that no man should presume to express any thought in clearer or purer terms than God has employed; and, from this point of view, he criticises particularly the word ὁμοούσιος in the confessional definitions of the Trinity, although he himself is in hearty and full accord with the positions maintained in the latter. In 1539, on the contrary (compare also statements in his work against Erasmus, Jena, iii, 218), he justifies the use of this word, and then remarks, in general, that the position, that no more, nor other, words than those found in the Scriptures are to be used, cannot be maintained, especially when engaged in controversy or seeking to refute heretics. He instances the employment of the terms, original sin and inherited depravity (*Adamsseuche*).

Thus, too, he availed himself in his Christology, for example, of the scholastic terms "*communicatio idiomatum*." He had at an earlier day cited, as a pure human invention without any scriptural authority, the maxim: "The essence of God neither is begotten nor begets"; whereas he afterward, as we have seen in the disputation above referred to, acknowledges its validity.[1]

Among the ancient symbols, he prized above all others the simple, so-called *Apostles' Creed*. No one, he declares, could have better summarized the truth in so brief and clear a form. It was probably, he thinks, either composed by the apostles themselves, or arranged from their writings or sermons by the most competent of their pupils. In the *Smalcald Articles*, he expressly accepts also the so-called Athanasian Creed. In a manuscript of the year 1538, in seeking to establish the agreement of his teaching with the doctrines of the entire true Christian Church, he combines, as the three symbols of the ecumenic Church, the Apostles' and Athanasian Creeds and that "attributed

[1] Erl. Ed., xlv, 83. Jena, ii, 430 b. Erl. Ed., xxv, 292. Op. Ex., xvi, 330 sq. Jena, i, 567 b.; cf. also Jena, i, 572.

to Ambrose and Augustine," *i. e.*, the *Te Deum laudamus*, adding also the Nicene. He regards the Athanasian symbol as designed to be a defence of the Apostles' Creed.[1]

Beyond this, Luther, as may be strikingly seen by a comparison of his doctrinal writings with those of earlier theologians, or with those of the Lutheran dogmaticians, always strove, as far as possible, even in the very language used, merely to further "elaborate" (*ausstreichen*) the divine Word. He adopted, indeed, particularly in expounding the doctrine of the Trinity, the traditional formulas. But he was always dissatisfied, for example, with the terms, "Trinity" and "*Dreifaltigkeit*," although we cannot do without such words. He finds them cold, and not meeting the requirements of the subject. The term "*Dreifaltigkeit*" he pronounces "real poor German," and the term "*Dreiheit*" as "sounding altogether too much like mockery." He always, instead of following the "multiform distinctions, dreams and fancies of the schools," prefers to take "only expressions out of the Scriptures."[2]

7. *Fundamental Articles.*

ALL DOCTRINES CLOSELY RELATED—IGNORANCE OR DENIAL BY INDIVIDUALS—CHURCH MUST CONFESS ALL DOCTRINES.

We have seen that Luther regarded the contents of the divine Word as constituting one consistent whole, with one central point dominating all. We are now brought back to this thought by the interesting question, *whether, and in how far, it is to be demanded that all the separate items, or articles* (*of faith*), *shall be believed by every individual Christian and confessed by the Church.* We have noticed how decidedly Luther gives precedence to *the chief article*, whereas, as he says, the other articles are not so strongly urged (*hart getrieben*) by the Scriptures. Yet, on the other hand, the latter are also founded upon the Scriptures; and, as Luther maintains especially against the Sacramentarians, they all hang together as one whole as closely and necessarily as the different parts of one ring. Two questions

[1] Erl. Ed., ix, 29; xxv, 115; xxiii, 252 sqq.

[2] Ibid. ix, 1; iv, 168; vi, 230; xii, 378.

are here involved, which must be, first of all, carefully discriminated: first, whether a man who accepts the chief article may at the same time, without endangering his salvation, remain in ignorance of other separate articles; and secondly, whether, after all the articles have been fully set before an individual, error persisted in with respect to separate points, or even the open denial of some, can still exist together with a saving faith in the central point of all, the grace of God in Christ. We find an answer to the first question at least, in Luther's acknowledgment of the faith of Adam (who believed in Christ as the seed of the woman) as a saving faith, although the latter knew as yet nothing of Christ's birth from a virgin.[1] We find in Luther's writings no discussion of the question in so far as subjects of the new covenant are concerned. To these the entire truth of Scripture has been already revealed; and we are thus at once brought to face the second question. Here Luther not only declares, as we have seen, that the chief article will not permit those who believe it to fall into heresy; but he declares, also, that he has observed in the whole history of Christianity, that such persons, although they have sometimes been in error upon other points, are yet preserved and brought back again at length to the right path; for all other articles find their proper places for him who holds firmly to the chief article of Christ. The light of this central truth dissipates the clouds resting upon the others. Yet he again charges that the Sacramentarians, though they err only upon the one point, destroy thereby the whole truth, or the self-consistent ring. There is here no real contradiction; for the very fact that the latter persist in their error, which must yet in the end vanish before a real faith in the chief article, appeared to him to be evidence enough that they did not in their hearts entertain a real regard for that article itself. The question may, indeed, then be asked: Has *every* separate article of faith, without any discrimination, where the Word of God has been fully presented, really, by virtue of its connection with the chief article, such importance that an error in regard to it will prevent the salvation of those who persist in it until the end of life, since it will be thereby evident that they did not firmly enough believe in the chief article? Luther maintains this

[1] Op. Ex., i, 245.

expressly in the case of Sacramentarians who stubbornly persist in their opposition to the truth. That he did not mean, however, to make such an assertion in regard to *every* error, and without any regard for the circumstances under which it is cherished, is clear from his declarations in regard to true Christians yet remaining under the darkness of the Papacy. Even such must, indeed, be set right upon the chief article, though it be only upon their death-beds, if they are to attain salvation. They must there, at least, depend simply and alone upon Christ and His grace, as God snatched St. Bernhard and many others at the last moment, as it were, out of the fire. But Luther can here evidently not mean to maintain that the true light has dawned upon the minds of such and been accepted by them in regard, likewise, to all the other articles which they had before refused to acknowledge. We recall, also, that he had always tolerated among the Bohemian Brethren those who were weak, even in regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, without making their salvation dependent upon the final abandonment of their prejudices upon that point.

There yet remains to be discussed the latter portion of the question above proposed, namely: *Whether, and in how far, all the articles of faith* (even admitting that not every deviation of the individual believer from these must prove fatally destructive) *must be made by the Church, as such, a portion of her teaching and confession.* Luther has evidently no other idea than that every congregation, or church, which desires to be faithful to its duty must publicly and decidedly confess all the truth which we have found him presenting in his doctrinal writings or defending against its assailants—and that they must do this in view of the thoroughly scriptural character of the positions thus maintained and their intimate connection with the central point of Christian faith. He evidently regarded it as his unquestionable calling to labor with all his power to induce the Church, with whose guidance he was in part entrusted, to make such full and open confession. He declares that, if he only sees that others preach Christ as the Son of God and Saviour, he is at one with them, and regards them as his dear brethren in Christ—as such preaching has continued even under the Papacy, despite the many errors which have crept in with it. He thus recognized also as brethren, or members of the Universal Church of Christ, those upon whom

the light has, indeed, shone, but in whom it has not as yet driven away all the clouds of error. But it by no means follows from this that he would under any circumstances have prepared, in the name and at the request of any definite body of professing Christians, or any church in this sense of the word, any confession tolerating such errors. We recall, on the contrary, the very strong expressions which he employed in rejecting union with the Sacramentarians: "Of the doctrine (which is not ours, but God's) we can remit not even a jot, nor can we permit either abatement or addition. It must be, as it were, a continuous and round golden circle. * * * If they (the opponents) believed the Word to be the Word of God, they would know that one word of God is all (His words) and all His words are one; likewise, one article is all articles, and all articles are one." Against this position nothing can be proved by the consideration which he showed for some who were not in full accord with so important a doctrine as that of the Lord's Supper; for, although he did, indeed, extend the hand of fellowship to those who could not yet see their way clear to accept the extreme refinement of the doctrine, the manducation by total unbelievers, he yet, in the confession which he was then called upon to prepare for the Church, *i. e.*, the *Smalcald Articles*, endeavored, without any regard whatever for such, to confess the full round truth.[1] Such, then, is the position of Luther, as indicated by his own writings, upon the question of the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxiii, 258; l, 29, 13; xxxi, 340. Jena, iii, 181 b; cf. Vol. I., p. 505. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 334 sqq.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

The subject of the preceding chapter required the somewhat extended examination of the general view of Luther in regard to it, as well as the discussion of a number of special questions. We had there to do with views and doctrines in which Luther proclaims and develops a new, highly significant and productive principle, which not alone stands in marked contrast with the pre-reformation theology, but whose free and positive application is characteristic of his teaching as contrasted, also, with the later orthodoxy which bore his name. The historical review of the Reformer's writings, to which the earlier portions of the present work were devoted, had brought the general principle in question into distinct view, but had given no opportunity for the treatment of a number of the important separate points.

In the following pages, on the contrary, we shall be compelled to pass rapidly over many subjects which in a complete system of theology would demand more extended treatment. These will be found to be, in part, subjects in the treatment of which Luther adopts largely the traditional formulas, having found no occasion to recast them in the light of the newly-fixed central point of saving doctrine. Among such subjects may be mentioned the Trinity, Angels, Creation, etc. They are in part, also, doctrinal points and questions in regard to which the peculiarity of Luther's position lay precisely in his refusal to enter upon their consideration in such a way as may be appropriate in a dogmatic system. This, again, is susceptible of various explanations. Thus, for example, we find among the very frequent references of the Reformer to the divine attributes, some of which throw a new and thoroughly characteristic light upon this important subject, no atempt anywhere to classify, or group, the separate attributes with precision. The reason of this is, as intimated, a lack of interest in formal and systematic arrangement. In

other cases, as, indeed, in the general outline of Christian and theological truth, we must seek the explanation, to some extent, in the fact that eschatological questions received comparatively little attention in that period. The most important doctrines, finally, which we must here consider in their mutual relations have already, for the most part, been so fully examined, even in their minuter details, in our historical survey of the theological development of Luther and of his struggles with opponents, that we shall very frequently be able to meet all the requirements of our present undertaking by simply referring to what has been already presented.

1. *Nature and Attributes.*

GOD HIDDEN AND REVEALED—OMNIPOTENCE—OMNIPRESENCE—ETERNITY—OMNISCIENCE—DECREES—ZEAL AGAINST SIN—LOVE—INCOMPREHENSIBILITY—COMMANDMENTS—JUDGMENTS—SECRET WILL—ABSOLUTE DECREE INSCRUTABLE—EMPHASIS UPON THE REVEALED GOD.

Of *a priori*, or purely intellectual, speculations concerning the Nature of God, or of attempts to define what God is in and of Himself, without regard to His relation to the world and to ourselves, Luther would hear nothing. He is always concerned to know how God presents Himself to our apprehension in His divine activity and self-revelation. Even the declarations made by God concerning Himself in the Scriptures were declarations concerning Himself as acting upon the world and the human race and offering Himself to them. On the other hand, he never for a moment doubts that, so far as God permits us to apprehend Himself, we have real revelations of the divine Being and His essential nature—that the conceptions and apprehensions which we thus obtain, with all their possible imperfection, are yet by no means merely matters of subjective consciousness: for it is the *purpose* of God to reveal Himself, and He is truthful and trustworthy. The only question is, where it may please God to allow Himself to be actually and truly found by us sinful men as *our* God. This, as we have seen, is not possible in the general revelations of nature, but only in that of the divine Word contained in the Bible.

There are, however, TWO DISTINCT FEATURES in the inner apprehension of God, and the contemplation of His being and character,

which are found in Luther side by side, or in contrast with one another. We became familiar with them both when reviewing the writings of Luther dating from the pre-reformation period. In studying the relation which these two conceptions bear to one another in the maturity of his theological views, we shall discover the peculiar content and character of his doctrine concerning God.

We have seen, upon the one hand, that the sense of the divine power and majesty, which is a fundamental element in all religious character, was peculiarly vivid in the case of Luther. With the consciousness of the sinner, to whom salvation can come only from above, and who must be nothing more than material for the divine remoulding energy, was combined, in him, also the consciousness of the creature as such, which feels itself to be as bare matter in the hand of the all-governing Creator, as nothing in the presence of the supreme Existence. In producing this state of mind we recognize, along with the influence of Augustinianism, in a very marked degree also that of Mysticism. In the conflict with the Pelagianism of the Romish theology, Luther went to the greatest extreme in this direction in the propositions laid down in his publication against Erasmus. All things, according to his theory, come to pass with absolute necessity by virtue of the universal agency (*Allwirksamkeit*) of the divine power. This necessity is an inevitable inference from the divine foreknowledge. It applies to evil as well as to good—and not only to the development of evil since its intrusion among men, but also to its original entrance to the world. The recognition of this fact cannot be avoided by any appeal to the moral nature of God, to His goodness, or even to His righteousness; for the absoluteness which characterizes the nature of God belongs likewise to His will so distinctly that we cannot lay down laws for Him, but must accept as right whatever He wills, just because He wills it. His will itself, moreover, belongs to His nature, is His very nature—and is therefore unchangeable.

That God is essentially good is established by Luther, already in the *First Exposition of the Psalms*, by appealing to His mercy shown in preparing salvation for the sinful. But he deduces it also from that righteousness which is displayed in dealing with those who are given over to destruction.[1] Righteous-

ness, says he, is God Himself. God is the supreme Good. Hence, even hell is full of God and of the supreme Good. In his pamphlet against Erasmus, he deduces it also from that universal divine agency by which God moves the will of the ungodly. God, says he, would cease to be God, or good, if He should cease to act upon the wicked. God is hence good, not only when He in His righteousness condemns the wicked to perdition, but even —what seems to reason cruel and unrighteous—when He, by His own influence upon them, hardens them, and punishes them for their hardened condition. This absolute agency, by which God works life and death, and all in all, purely according to His own will, does not, indeed, according to Luther, belong to the teachings of the revelation which God has given of Himself. In considering it, and in the question, how the revealed announcement, that God does not desire the death of the sinner, can be harmonized with it, we have to do with God as *hidden*, and *not preached*, into whose being no human speculations can penetrate. But it is just this "unpreached God" who, as Luther says, "is God in *His own nature and majesty*." [1]

While thus recalling such expressions of Luther as the above, we must, however, bear in mind that they occur only in occasional publications, or in passages scattered through his writings, in the great mass of which far more stress is laid upon the simple and practical attempt to rebuke the claims to merit of his own upon the part of the unrepentant sinner, and to console the contrite sinner by the proclamation of the forgiving *grace* and *love* of God. This is the testimony concerning the "*preached God*." Even in the earlier years, to which the above citations are to be traced, the *incarnate and crucified Son of God* stands out clearly as the great central point, in which we are to seek for all our knowledge of God. To start with the humanity of Christ, through which the mercy of God is revealed to us, and to mount through it to the invisible Father, who has through it done such great things for us, is then already declared by Luther to be the single and only way to the knowledge of God.[2] To this course he points persons distressed upon the subject of predestination,[3] and in his tract, *De servo arbitrio*, he hastens to this from the con-

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 491 sq.

[2] Thus in Briefe, ii, 226.

[3] Cf. Vol. I., p. 332.

sideration of the hidden will of God. In Christ, he declares, we see right clearly the true name of God—how good and kind, etc., He is. This is the true *Cabala* of the name of the Lord, not the fabled *Cabala* of the superstitious Jews framed upon the *Tetragramma* (יהוה).[1] The quickening, inspiring activity which God seeks to manifest through His Son, the Redeemer, is attributed to His fundamental character and nature; whereas the "killing" influence, which also proceeds from Him, is defined as "God's strange work," in contrast with the former as His "own work."[2]

This feature of the doctrine concerning God, the testimony to His compassionate love in Christ, held thus, from the beginning, the place of prominence in Luther's teaching. Even the proclamation of the righteousness of God and His wrath against sin was but designed to prepare the way for "His own work." It is to prepare man for the reception of the "righteousness of God," in the passive sense of the term, in which man is justified by the God of grace.[3] We find at a very early date the declaration, that God hates wrath, namely, death.[4] Even the usual utterances of Luther in regard to the power of God have no other aim; if man is urged to renounce all claim to worthiness of his own in the presence of the almighty Creator, it is that he may rejoice in the all-efficacious grace of the same supreme Ruler. Yet, back of this idea, which finds utterance in the joyous preaching of the Gospel, there remains, forming a dark background to the picture, from which the eye instinctively turns with dread, the unpreached, hidden God, whose nature appears as only power and omnipotence of will, and who, even when proclaiming life through His appointed messengers, has yet, in His hidden will, decreed death, and is capable of casting by His power into unavoidable destruction. Luther, in such connections, speaks as though, in fact, the making alive and the killing belonged equally to this God as His own peculiar work. It would, accordingly, be only in the preaching for which God has given commandment, that he would make the former appear as "His own work." Is it possible for One consciousness, One faith, to thus maintain these two conceptions side by side?

Yet we find them in the later writings of Luther still standing

[1] Comm. ad Gal., iii, 221.
[2] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 143, 189, 257.
[3] Ibid., p. 72.
[4] Ibid., p. 103.

as distinctly opposed to one another as ever, with no solution of the difficulties involved in the question of their mutual relations. Luther even himself warns against every attempt to fathom the mysteries which enshroud the subject. Nevertheless, we dare not overlook the fact, that the position of these two conceptions of the divine character was relatively changed—not alone in the public utterances of Luther, but in his own inner apprehension as well—in a remarkable and significant, although by no means clearly and sharply defined, way. The citations above adduced all date from the period ending with the close of the year 1525.[1] In the quotations to follow, we shall avail ourselves of the entire remaining portion of the Reformer's life.

We note, first, the development, in its final form, of the doctrine of God as a "*preached, revealed* God." We gain here, if confining our attention strictly to deliverances directly bearing upon this idea, a comprehensive doctrine of the divine attributes, and, apparently at least, of the divine nature, in which the fundamental elements appear to stand out in the clearest light. Yet we must, after all, still inquire whether the representations here made can hold their place as against the other aspect of the subject as still maintained by the Reformer—whether, in view of the latter also, these definitions dare be retained as true definitions of the divine nature.

It is, according to the class of passages now under review, in the revelation of Himself—in the Scriptures, in Christ—that we are to learn to know God.

From the Scriptures themselves, *i. e.*, from the name Jehovah, Luther in one passage derives the description of God as *Nature itself*, or the simply existing One (*der schlechthin Seiende*). He derives the name "from the word, Hajo, or Havo," equivalent to "nature," or "being," in which the *yod* is the sign of a verbal noun. We might, he says, substitute for this Tetragrammaton the German Trigrammaton, "ist." God is, from all eternity, in and of Himself, without beginning and without end. It is with him simply "*Ist*," or Being (*Wesen*);[2] and this "*Ist*," or Being, is incomprehensible and unutterable. It was perhaps in this

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 498 sq.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxxii, 304 sqq.; cf. Jena, i, 573 b. Luther had himself at an earlier day (Op. Ex., xiv. 276 sq.) explained the name Jehovah with an artful interpretation of the separate letters.

sense that the ancients spoke of the unutterableness of the name Jehovah, of which idea the Jews of the present day make such a perverse use. It might thus appear as though we had, in this very exalted, although at the same time abstract, designation, been led right up to a view of the hidden God. But Luther proceeds at once to give the caution: "This Jehovah, *i. e.*, divine Being" (*Wesen*), we are now to recognize and to seek precisely in the Scriptures, as He has there revealed Himself through His Word.

This warning is repeated again and again by Luther in various connections. The Godhead is defined, in contradistinction from God revealing Himself to us in His Word, as the "naked Godhead"—the absolute God—God in the predication of His essence (*Deus in praedicamento substantiae*)—God in His majesty. As such, He does not permit us to find or comprehend Him. The infinite God is for us a "*Deus vagus*"—unfixed, or indefinite. In this sense, it is said that God dwells in a light which is for us unapproachable (1 Tim. vi. 16). Yea, for us this God in His majesty is a consuming fire (Heb. xii. 29). We are to seek Him as *invested and clothed* (*vestitus et indutus*) in His Word—God in the predication of relation (*praedicamento relationis*)—God as He has concealed His majesty most profoundly in His incarnate Son, who sucks the breasts of Mary and hangs upon the cross. Here, moreover, He is to be *actually found*. The Son represents to us the Father's heart and will. Where the God, Christ Jesus, is, there is the entire God, or Godhead; there is also found the Father and the Holy Spirit. The incarnate Son is as a veil, or envelope (*Hülle*), in which the divine majesty presents itself to us with all its gifts. In this connection Luther mentions, along with the Word, as bringing to us this God in Christ, particularly also baptism, the Lord's Supper and absolution.[1]

What importance attaches to this One way to God and to the knowledge of God, Luther had originally learned amid the inner conflicts into which he had been led by dwelling upon his own ideas of God. His feeling in the matter was intensified in his conflict with the fanatical sects, who sought in their own way to scale the walls of heaven with their speculations.

[1] Op. Ex., ii, 174; iv, 101 sq., 122; xix, 22, 76; xx, 177 sqq., 180. Erl. Ed., xlvii, 145, 192 sq.

He was constantly presenting such warnings, especially to persons who brooded anxiously over the uncertainty whether the will of God were favorable to themselves or otherwise. He pointed such to the Word of the self-revealing God, in so far as it is a Word of promise and grace. But he presents also the Commandments, in which God manifests His will touching our moral life in the outward world, to such readers as were in danger of suffering their thoughts, in this direction also, to be diverted to the hidden God. He recognizes a fanaticism and fatalism which declares: We need not make provision for our bodies or our life—we need no books, etc.; since, if God has but so determined, we shall without thus troubling ourselves live on, become learned, etc. Against this, he teaches that it is our duty, without brooding over the hidden things of the divine government, to use the means appointed by God in accordance with His revealed will, and to pursue the calling assigned by Him. By acting otherwise, we commit the grievous sin of tempting God.[1]

What are, then, the fundamental attributes which we discover when we contemplate this self-revealing God?

The attribute of OMNIPOTENCE retains, even when viewed from the standpoint of revelation, a fundamental significance. We have already[2] found Luther designating the article upon God, the almighty Creator, the highest article of faith. And he still, in view of the divine universal agency as contrasted with the power of the creature (and therefore not merely in view of the relation of human sinfulness and the free grace of God), so decidedly rejects the idea of a free human will, that he again, as at an earlier period,[3] applies to our relation to the Creator the figure of a saw in the hand of a carpenter (following Isa. x. 15).[4] We can, says he, do neither anything truly good nor anything evil, just as the work of the saw is not its own, but that of the man who handles it. But the questions which are inseparably connected with this position would lead us to the discussion of the secret counsels of God, and must, therefore, be deferred for the present. We may, however, remark in passing that extreme statements respecting the universal agency (*Allwirksamkeit*) of God, such as are found only in occasional passages in the earlier

[1] Op. Ex., vii, 196; x, 224 sq.; cf. also supra, Vol. I., p. 330.
[2] Supra, p. 214. [3] Vol. I., p. 326. [4] Op. Ex., xxii, 117 sq.

periods, but, when so found, carried out with great emphasis, can scarcely be discovered by diligent searching among the entire mass of the later writings of the Reformer.

The conception of OMNIPRESENCE is found in very intimate association with that of omnipotence. As the universal agent, God must be omnipresent. This omnipresence is at the same time a genuine presence of God Himself. His essential nature (*Wesen*), His spirit, etc., are everywhere present with His power, and in such a way that He penetrates and controls all things, even to their minutest parts. Yet it is a presence that is far different from that of any created being—a presence in which He is just as far exalted above all things as He is truly present in them. This idea was developed with special fulness in the above-cited utterances against Zwingli. He there presents his view of the supreme and spiritual mode of existence as contrasted with the finite and sensible. God is thus *repletively* present. Even when an existence in heaven is attributed to Him, this is not to be conceived of as a local presence. God is thus present also even in the midst of hell. From this divine presence Luther then discriminates that in which we recognize Him as God, where we have His Word, faith and Spirit, where His people are, who alone realize that He is such a God. The former he designates the *natural*, the latter the *spiritual* presence of God.[1]

The very name Jehovah expresses, in Luther's view, the ETERNITY of God, in direct unity with His aseity (independence) and immutability. God possesses a nature by virtue of which He is before and beyond time, and by virtue of which everything that we see transpiring consecutively in time is always equally near for him—stands before His view in one moment, is comprehended by Him at a single glance. Thus all things are for Him present, without any before or after, just because He exists simply without calculation of time (*simpliciter extra temporis rationem*). Luther postulates a beginning for time itself, declaring that before the beginning (Gen. i. 1) there was nothing—neither days nor time. But yet, says he, God then existed. For us creatures of the earth, indeed, for whom all things move forward step by step, this eternal divine life is inconceivable. This eternal existence of God is regarded as involving also His omnipotence

[1] Supra, p. 116 sq.; 139 sqq. Erl. Ed., xli, 340.

as against all existence outside of Himself (which, like time itself, can have derived its being only from Him) and His perfect self-sufficiency. Luther even declares in one place that it embraces all the attributes of God, His omnipotence, blessedness, wisdom, etc., since God never received anything from any one (cf. Rom. xi. 35).[1]

That this eternal, omnipotent God, who is above all things as He is in all things, is also eternally conscious of His own existence and movements, and present everywhere also as *All-knowing*, or OMNISCIENT, are propositions which Luther never had occasion to make the subject of special discussion. His chief utterances referring specifically to the divine knowledge of future events are connected with and involved in his declarations concerning the eternity of God. He here expressly includes also the deeds of the human will. Even the evil deeds of men were seen of God from all eternity. It is conceded, accordingly, that He also knew from all eternity who should and shall be saved.

With this foreknowledge was most intimately connected, in Luther's conception, the IMMUTABILITY of the divine decrees. God can never have regretted anything which He had done, because not observing until afterward to what it would lead. "God is from eternity fixed (*firmus*) in His counsel (*consilio*); He sees and knows all things."[2] If we now inquire in what relation the promises of salvation to all sinners, on the one hand, and, on the other, the fruitlessness of the latter in the cases of so many persons stand to this foreknowledge and these eternal decrees, we are thereby brought again, as in the questions touching the universal divine agency, face to face with the mystery of the hidden God.

But as in the earlier period, so also in his later writings, Luther sought in preaching to bear testimony with very special fulness and emphasis to the *Ethical Attributes* of God, and to these, particularly, as ministering to our salvation.

He always announces with great earnestness the HOLY ZEAL of God against sin. In this light, particularly, he regards the declaration that God is a consuming fire. With His will there is combined the most vigorous and violent power. God, therefore,

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 29 sq., 66, 157; li, 459. Op. Ex., i, 95; xviii, 281 sq.

[2] Briefe, iii, 354 sq. Op. Ex., ii, 168 sq.

both can and will punish. This is essentially the same idea, to Luther's mind, as that conveyed by the term *Righteousness*, when the latter is used to designate the divine attribute, "by virtue of which God is Himself righteous and punishes the wicked." Luther, indeed, still, as in his earlier writings,[1] declares that, when the "righteous" God is proclaimed in the Scriptures, we are to think rather of the God who makes us righteous by showing compassion toward the sinful; that "righteous" in scriptural language means properly "pious"; and that the *strict* righteousness of God is called by the Scriptures "zeal, justice, or integrity" (*Ernst, Gericht, Richtigkeit*). But he not only thus, in fact, acknowledges the existence of this strict righteousness, but he himself still repeatedly employs the term "righteousness" itself in this sense. Moreover, as this involves the punishment of sin, it carries with it also, in Luther's conception, the regard of God for the commandments with whose violation this attribute has to do. God is righteous, because He insists upon that which is right in His sight. Thus God is, for him, "The eternal Righteousness and Purity (*Klarheit*), who by His very nature (*aus sciner Art*) hates sin."[2] That this is the essential nature of the divine righteousness becomes particularly manifest in the utterances of Luther in relation to the establishment of the divine work of redemption through Christ. Thus, in the very passage above cited, he declares that Christ took upon Himself this very wrath of God against sin, and transformed the wrathful Judge into a merciful God. Satisfaction has been rendered, he declares, to the divine righteousness by the sufferings of Christ. It was necessary that death, etc., should be vanquished by *justice*. He finds satisfaction thus rendered, none the less, also by Christ's perfect obedience to the divine commandments. Thus God would "have His honor and justice recompensed." Thus, it is only after satisfaction has been rendered to righteousness, that "mercy and grace [have] room to work upon us and in us."[3]

But while Luther thus bears faithful testimony to the righteousness of God, he has far more to say of the divine LOVE.

He inferred from the name Jehovah, as we have seen, that

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 72.

[2] Op. Ex., xiv, 207; xix, 24. Erl. Ed., x, 17; xii, 172.

[3] Erl. Ed., x, 449 sqq.; vii, 175 sqq., 299 sq.; xv, 385.

God is essentially simply *is*, or being. Yet he would not have us rest satisfied with this, but we should learn from the Scriptures more definitely what is contained in this being. And what do we thus find God to be? Luther answers: "A God exists from whom we are to expect everything good, and to whom we may take refuge in every hour of need." He regards, as an appropriate name for this God, the German name "*Gott*," deriving it from "good," and he thinks God is called good, "as an eternal fountain which overflows with pure goodness, and from which proceeds everything that is, or is called, good."[1] Luther means to express the same thought when he, with John, declares that *God is love*. Love, says he, is rightly denominated the most precious, most perfect virtue in God and man. All that philosophers have ever said of it is as nothing compared with that which John pours out from a full heart, when he says: "God is love itself, and His nature is pure love"; yea, the divine nature is nothing but an oven and glow of such love, filling heaven and earth. Nor does he so speak of the wrath of God against fallen humanity as though the love of God had ceased to be exercised, and must be awakened again by Christ's work of reconciliation. On the contrary, he most impressively traces the mission and work of Christ to this divine love. Christ, he declares, could not have manifested love toward us, if God had not in eternal love so willed, and Christ, in His love toward us, was but displaying obedience to God. It is, therefore, our privilege now to ascend through Christ to God's own heart. In this love God pours out, as Luther says, everything good—gives our bodies and our life, His grace and every blessing. Yea, He pours out, in the sphere of spiritual blessings, not the sun and moon, nor heaven and earth, but His own heart, and his well-beloved Son.[2]

Viewed in its relation to created beings, and especially to the sinful, this love is essentially the most profound condescension. The infinite majesty and power of God do not conflict at all with such love, but it is just as the supreme and omnipotent Being that God condescends to the lowliest and weakest, demanding only that the creature acknowledge its own lowliness and need and His majesty and compassion. It is the way of God to look

[1] Erl. Ed., xxi, 35–37.

[2] Ibid., xii, 326; xix, 366; xii, 258; xi, 151; xix, 381, 397, 368.

downward. He cannot look up nor around Himself, since there is nothing above Him nor any being equal to Himself. He therefore looks downward, and hence the deeper down any one is, the more clearly does God's eye rest upon him. "This is the title, and the most appropriate definition, of God: The Respecter of the despised and humble." This is then, too, the *glory* of our God, that He for our sakes condescends most deeply, entering human flesh, the bread of the sacrament, our mouth, heart and bosom: and we, accordingly, properly glorify Him, when we regard Him as the merciful God, our Father in Christ.[1]

This leads us to the conception of the divine "*righteousness*" which Luther, as we have seen, regarded as the distinctively biblical one. He not only discriminates the conception of "the righteousness of God" (*Gottesgerechtigkeit*) as a passive righteousness with which God endows us, and which, as it proceeds from God, must also be acceptable to Him,[2] from righteousness as an attribute of God Himself; but he sees an exhibition of the *latter* in the mercy which God shows towards us, in His justifying of the sinner, and bestowing upon him "the righteousness of God" in the former sense. The unity in which are combined both features of this divine attribute, making it possible for God thus to show mercy and yet hate sin, finds expression, for Luther, in the German word "*fromm*," which he regards as the equivalent of the scriptural term "righteous" (*gerecht*).[3] His idea of the meaning of this word may be gathered from his comment upon the Hebrew word תָּמִים (which he translates "*fromm*") in Ps. xviii. 24: "תָּמִים, *id est integer, probatus, perfectus, immaculatus—i. e., frumm*—who injures no one, does all things which he ought to do." He thus translates also כֵּנִים: "*fromm*," *i. e., recti—integri, perfecti*.[4] We are thus conducted to the conclusion that God is righteous, or "*fromm*," because His dealings with men are right—which means that they are morally perfect—and that the very compassion which He manifests belongs to moral perfection. The two features of the divine righteousness are further reconciled, in Luther's view, by the fact,

[1] Erl. Ed., xv, 408. Op. Ex., vii, 270. Erl. Ed., xxx, 71 sqq. Cf. supra, p. 209.

[2] Cf. also, Erl. Ed., xxix, 81. Jena, iii, 229 b.

[3] Cf. also Op. Ex., xvii, 250; "Justus=fromm."

[4] Op. Ex., xvi, 103; x, 146.

that God permits men to enjoy the benefits of His mercy only upon the ground of the perfect satisfaction for their sins rendered by Christ, and only when they themselves, as believers, depend upon the righteousness of Christ, and thus, in their very faith, assume and maintain a right attitude toward God. Touching the last point, we recall earlier passages, especially from the *Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*. Righteousness, says he, gives to every man what is his due, and I now give God that which is His, when I believe upon Him, and account Him a gracious Father. Thus Abraham, because he believed, gave God the glory, or that which belonged to Him.[1] We shall have occasion to say more of this when treating of the appropriation of salvation (Chap. VI.).

How far, it may yet be asked, does this love of God, which pours forth such rich and full streams of blessing, extend? Luther says of it: The unworthiness of no man, nor that of all men combined—yea, not even the richly-merited eternal wrath and condemnation—can be so great, that the greatness of love and grace, or forgiveness, does not overbalance and envelop it in its height, depth, breadth and width. Hence, this love, as Luther most emphatically and without any qualification declares, seeks to reach all individual men. Christ bore the sins of *all* men, not only of some. From this very fact, that He died for the sins of the whole world, I, who am a part of the world, may most certainly infer that He died also for mine. The invitations and promises of grace are addressed to all men; they are so general in their terms that no one may count himself excluded. The Son of God was given for all men; all should believe on Him; and none so believing shall be lost. Let every one, then, consider his own case, and inquire whether he is also a man, and thus a part of that world which God loved (John iii. 16). It is the will of God that all shall thus recognize their sins, believe, and be saved. This will is evident and certain; and hence, in our prayers for such heavenly blessings, we do not need, as in our petitions for earthly good, to commit it to the will of God to do or not to do as we desire; but we are to know and believe that He will grant our requests gladly and without any uncertainty. Nor should we suffer ourselves to be shaken in this confidence by

[1] Erl. Ed., xvii, 117. Comm. ad Gal., i, 328.

the reflection that God knows all things, and that all the works and thoughts of all creatures must come to pass in accordance with His will; but we should hold fast to the truth, that it is nevertheless His earnest desire and intention—even commandment—determined from eternity, to save all men, as it is clearly announced, in Ezek. xviii. 23, that God does not desire to take the sinner's life—and no sinner should abandon this assurance to give himself up to foolish thoughts suggested by the devil.[1] In these declarations, Luther assumes a decidedly different attitude from that which he had previously maintained toward the question as to the love and loving will of God. How could, for example, in accordance with the views now expressed, a "falling below the standard of the apostolic spirit" be found in the utterance of 2 Pet. iii. 9?[2] His interpretation of 1 Tim. ii. 4: "Who will have all men to be saved (Luther: helped) and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,"[3] belongs, accordingly, with certainty to the earlier period to which the older editions ascribe it. It is of peculiar interest, as testifying how far Luther was at that earlier period from accepting the views expressed in these later utterances. He there still felt bound to say of this declaration of Paul: The immediate subject is here the help of God considered in the most general way, particularly that peace and peaceful government for which we are to pray; and we are most distinctly given to understand that it is only God who helps wherever help is secured: it is not hereby declared that it is God's purpose to save all men. The second clause of the verse he applies, on the contrary, only to believers: God will have all men to be helped, but some, particularly, in such a way that they may come to the knowledge of the truth. The declaration immediately following, concerning the Mediator given for all, he understands to mean merely that all who are saved, and come to God, come and are saved only through the Mediator.[4] From the way in which we have heard Luther express himself in later periods, we infer that he would then no longer have found it necessary to resort to such interpretations of this passage.

Luther also very frequently reproaches with their unbelief, as

[1] Erl. Ed., xii, 329; xix, 223. Jena, i, 539; iv, 552. Erl. Ed., xii, 337; iii, 33 sq. Briefe, iii, 355.

[2] Supra, p. 245 (A. D., 1524.)

[3] Erl. Ed., li, 316 sqq.

[4] Cf. upon this verse also supra, p. 478 sq. and Briefe, ii, 452.

being entirely their own fault, those who refuse to accept the Word of God and the salvation which it offers. He says: "That not all accept Christ, is the fault of those persons themselves who do not believe and who indulge their incredulity. Meanwhile, the declaration and promise of God remain universal, that God desires (*vult*) all men to be saved." No one is excluded who does not desire to exclude himself. If many are lost, it is the fault of the devil and the evil will of man; for the will of God is a gracious will. He who excludes himself must hold himself accountable for his exclusion. In a *Sermon of the House Postils* (*Dietrich's Edition*), Luther, in commenting upon the saying of Christ: "Many are called, but few chosen," refers also to the declaration, in John iii. 16, of God's love for the whole world. The interpretation of the former passage according to which God offers His grace to many, but allows but few to experience it, he declares to be a wicked misunderstanding. We should be compelled, says he, to cherish hostile feelings toward this God, to whose will alone it was to be attributed that we are not all saved. The meaning he understands, upon the contrary, to be: Although God commands that the Gospel be preached to all, in order that all may accept it, yet many do not conduct themselves rightly toward it, and hence God is not pleased with them and does not desire to have them. This is called by Christ "not being chosen," *i. e.*, "not so conducting themselves that God should have pleasure in them."[1] Still, however, in regard to the question, *why* they do not believe, but remain in sin, we must again refer the reader to what yet remains to be said in reference to the other feature of Luther's doctrine concerning God.

Such, then, is the extent, according to Luther, of the loving will of God. And, inasmuch as God is love according to His very nature, Luther calls the exercise of this love and grace (after Isa. xxviii. 21) the "peculiar" or "own" work of God, and again, His "natural" work. He is "driven" (*genöthigt*) to the works strange to Him, *i. e.*, anger, judgment, eternal condemnation, etc., only by our own pride; and the object even of these is the accomplishment of His "natural" work. By humiliating us, He seeks to draw us to Himself. Our God, he says at another time,

[1] Jena, iv, 552. Erl. Ed., ix, 10; xi, 291; xxix, 233; iv, 122; ii, 84 sqq.

is a God of life, and can of Himself do nothing other than what is good.[1] Luther now often expresses himself—as he had once before declared that God hates wrath—as though God was *not* in any case really *angry*, or, at least, was angry only with sin, and not with persons. He says: "God, although He hates and punishes sin, yet does not hate the person; for He loves the world," etc. Still further, he declares: "There is in God no wrath or disfavor; His heart and thoughts are nothing but pure love. Even by sometimes afflicting us, He but proves His love toward us." In thus speaking, Luther does not have in view only the dealings of God with His own believing children, although it is true that the majority of his utterances of this kind have more immediate reference to such. Thus, for example, he draws from Hos. xi. 8 the general conclusion: "That heart aroused to wrath on account of the sins of men is *not the true* heart of God (*non verum Dei cor*); but this is the true heart of God, which is affected by our miseries, which burns with pity," etc. The idea intended to be conveyed by such declarations as these is essentially the same as that embodied in the distinction drawn between God's strange and His own, or natural, work. The nature of God is in itself "pure love and goodness"; but this very nature must also, when sin faces it, glow with zeal and act as a burning fire. In illustrating this thought, Luther compares God with the "king (queen) among the bees," which has no sting, and injures no one, but which must for protection, in order not to be killed by the drones, have others about it that can sting. Thus God suffers all manner of calamities, and even the devil himself, to come out of hell, and He uses them as stings on every hand.

Although, according to all the above utterances, love appears as the profoundest motive and the supreme aim of God—although Luther calls even the wrath of God but "angry love"—although he, likewise, would permit to men only such a "wrath of God" as itself springs from pure love and a good heart; yet he, at the same time, interprets the deeds of divine wrath as intended, in the first instance, to protect the honor and authority of God. It is by doing so—maintaining the divine authority by punishment, humiliating and crucifying the sinner, as such—that they are to be serviceable in advancing God's "own work." In this way we

[1] Op. Ex., xviii, 329. Erl. Ed., xxxvi, 70. Op. Ex., iii, 315; vi, 399, 402.

may perceive the harmony between the class of passages which we have here been considering and those above quoted concerning God's punitive righteousness. The object for which God uses the "stings" referred to is, in the same passage, stated to be: That God may remain within the bounds of His majesty. The declaration, that "God hates sin", retains its full force. Of sinners themselves, too, Luther again says, that God hates them—that is, in so far as they are sinners. He even deduces this from the nature of God: "God is not able to deny His nature, that is, He is not able not to hate sin and sinners; and He does this of necessity, for otherwise He would be unjust, and would love sin.' The ever-continuing love of God for the world can, moreover, be enjoyed by men only in so far as they by faith have fellowship with (part in) the Son, whom the Father has given, and who has rendered satisfaction to righteousness. Thus he says: "How, therefore, can these two contradictory things be true: I have sin and am most deserving of wrath and the divine hatred, and—the Father loves me? Nothing whatsoever can here intervene, except alone the Mediator, Christ." [1] There are disconnected utterances of Luther which sound altogether as though the anger of God were simply an illusion, and a matter of our own subjective imagination. Thus, he says of Christians: We may take courage from the thought that "God, although He seem to be angry, nevertheless is but doing His strange work *and simulating wrath* for the crucifixion of the lust of the flesh, which is contrary to God." Speaking of Jacob's wrestling with God, he says: To overcome God is to overcome that which is in our conscience (*Gewissen*) and is felt—not that God changes, but our conscience changes. God remains ever kind, although there be in our conscience no other idea than that He is angry.—He even goes on to say of the eternally lost: "Thus He is to the lost nothing but pure wrath, punishes them only with their own consciences." [2] This pain which sinners feel in their consciences, and which, according to Luther, rises, in the case of the lost, to the constant hellish pain of the sense of abandonment by God, is, in his conception, always merely something subjective—but this feeling is

[1] Jena, iv, 635 b, 661 b. Erl. Ed., xix, 370; xlii, 152; xiii, 147. Comm. ad. Gal., i, 238 sq.

[2] Op. Ex., v, 179; xxxiv, 207.

awakened by God Himself, and He can from His very nature not do otherwise than awaken it, so long as they remain in sin.

Luther's conception of God as pure love appears even to lead by implication to a Dualism between God, from whom all good, and only good, flows for our inner and outer life, and the devil, from whom proceed all the outward and inward discouragements of life. In what a sweeping yaw he ascribes all the latter to the devil, we shall have further occasion to observe (Chap. III.). Whilst declaring that God, who is love, is burning full of all that is good, he says of the devil, that he exercises the precise opposite of love, and occasions all the misery of the world. He classes the Law also (Chap. V.), which judges and curses sinners, and which Christ had to endure and overcome, with the devil, who assailed Christ and was overcome by Him. Yet it is, according to Luther, God Himself who permits the devil to accomplish all this, in accordance with the latter's own will and nature. God even employs the devil himself, as we have seen, as a "sting." "The devil does it, and God ordains it (*verhängts*); for otherwise we would become altogether too wicked." God ordains it, since He, in so far as may accord with His own purposes, allows the devil to do that which the latter does of his own accord in pure hatred and malicious will. Thus Luther here speaks of an "ordaining" (*Verhängen*), and also of a simple permission (*permittere*). And just in order that we may not, after the manner of the Manichæans, imagine that there are two gods, or different sources of good and evil things, God, as Luther in one passage declares, still calls that strange work His own, although it is not His own peculiar and characteristic work.[1]

Such, therefore, we are taught, is God, as He has revealed Himself, as He desires to be proclaimed to men, as He is to become the object of our faith and worship.

But has God now really, in this His revelation, manifested Himself entirely *as He essentially is?* Are we, according to Luther, to regard the absolute God and the conception gained by a combination of the specific statements of revelation as precisely corresponding in content, and actually one, to be discriminated only by the fact that the content in the latter case is presented in a restricted form, adapted to man's power of com-

[1] Erl. Ed., xix, 366 sqq.; vi, 402. Op. Ex., xviii, 329.

prehension? Or does there yet, upon Luther's theory, remain in God a dark background, lying beyond all revelation, in which His real, peculiar nature may perhaps repose, and in the contemplation of which the reliability of the revealed representations in general becomes questionable? In the latter case, how about the position of love in the nature of God, and the reality of His loving will?

We are not authorized, upon the basis of even the later writings of the Reformer, to give an affirmative reply to the first of the above questions; but are compelled still to give due acknowledgment to the other side of Luther's doctrine of God. When he seeks, as we have seen, to divert our attention from the absolute to the revealed God, his idea is, clearly enough, that an impenetrable darkness must still for us enshroud the nature of God in itself, and the relation between it and the God revealed to us —that, in consequence, such a dark cloud must rest particularly upon the relation between the inner being (heart) of God and His loving will, as represented in the revelation which He gives us.

We must refer again chiefly to the same leading passages upon the subject in the writings of Luther of which use has been already made, and, particularly, to those selected from his *Commentary upon Genesis*, which did not appear until near the close of his life.

God is *in His essence* (*substantia*), as Luther says, *wholly irrecognizable* (*plane incognoscibilis*). What He is in nature, we cannot define; we can only specify what He is not, as, for example, that He is not the voice, dove, etc., under the form of which He reveals Himself. In the predication of essence (*substantiae*) He remains incomprehensible, even although He reveals Himself in His relation to us. When Luther, nevertheless, offers a definition of this "*Substanz Gottes*," he describes it, not as a nature of love, but as "immeasurable wisdom and omnipotent power." This power is then represented as one with the *majesty* of God (*potentia absoluta seu majestas Dei*). The will of God is also spoken of, in connection with His power, as simply absolute. This is the *voluntas substantialis*, into which we should not even attempt to penetrate. It is only in connection with the preached God that a loving will is spoken of. With the essential will is combined foreknowledge. What God purposes according to *this* will, He has foreseen from eternity. This

wisdom, power, etc., are wholly inaccessible (*simpliciter inaccessibilia*) to reason.[1]

In this sphere, unapproachable to us, lie also the reasons for the divine *commandments*. Adam fell because he listened to Satan when the latter called in question the reasons for the prohibition of the fruit of the one tree. The divine *judgments* are also to be regarded as incomprehensible.[2] But to this sphere especially belong the eternal, essential divine *will and knowledge*, as related to the salvation of individuals. As, along with the revealed, there is also a hidden God, so together with the revealed will of God, that all should be saved, there remains also a secret predestination.

We have already heard Luther declare, when discussing this latter doctrine, that, although God knows all things, and everything must come to pass in accordance with His will, yet it is His earnest will to save all men. Nevertheless, he still concedes, *without any modification* of the sweeping terms, that everything comes to pass "according to the decree (*juxta decretum*) of the will of God." Similarly, in his *Commentary upon Genesis*, he appeals, in meeting those who sought to wrest his own former propositions concerning the necessity of all events to the service of Epicureanism, to the fact, that he had followed his thesis, "that all things are absolute and necessary," immediately with the caution, that we must look upon the revealed God. Yet the thesis itself he does not recall. The same idea lies embedded also in the application which he makes of Isa. x. 15, and of the figure of the saw. In what relation to the "earnest" will of God to save men, itself also determined from eternity, stands this *decretum voluntatis*, according to which everything comes to pass, and to which, therefore, as we are prone to think, and as seems to be established by the language of Isa. x., must be traced even the persistence of so many men in sin and their eternal punishment? These questions bring us again, according to Luther, into the dark region of mystery. That will to which we have suffered ourselves to be led back from our contemplation of the saving will of the revealed God is precisely, again, the *voluntas abscondita, imperscrutabilis*. There is, therefore, accord-

[1] Op. Ex., ii, 170–176; iv, 122.

[2] Op. Ex., iv, 122; vi, 291. Erl. Ed., xlvii, 300.

ing to Luther, such an *inscrutable will of God*, and men should be taught *that it exists;* it is only the attempt to fathom it that is to be avoided. There is a "secret counsel of God"; only we dare not imagine that we are to order our lives in accordance with it. Luther applies to this the scholastic term, *voluntas beneplaciti* (the will by virtue of which He does as He thinks best), and it is in his conception the same as the essential will (*voluntas substantialis*). He then again insists, that we are to look much rather at the *voluntas signi*, or the will revealed in Christ, the Gospel and the sacraments. He remarks, also, that the latter, the will of grace, ought properly to be called *voluntas beneplaciti*. Nothing is farther from his purpose, however, than to contradict, or object to, the discrimination of a double divine will.[1] His very language involves the acknowledgment that some are "elected" to salvation and others, accordingly, not elected, however he may have controverted the quotation in such connection of the passage, "Many are called," etc. This election belongs also to the sphere of that which is hidden, and which the preached Word will not and should not discuss. He protests against the reference of the case of the eight souls saved from the Flood "to the secret election by which God has arranged all things with Himself (*secum disposuit*) from eternity." The example of these persons should, on the contrary, serve only to humiliate us and arouse us to piety, warning us against the idea that we are in no danger of falling from grace after becoming its recipients. That there is such an election he does not, however, even here think of denying.[2] He expresses himself in a precisely similar way when discussing the term "*Versehung*" (foreordination). He warns such as are alarmed on account of foreordination, not to worry themselves at all upon the subject; but he does not deny the existence of such a foreordination resting solely in the will of God, merely saying: "It is forbidden to us to understand or concern ourselves about this." Even Paul, says he, is not speaking, in Rom. ix. 11, of "the divine foreordination in regard to every man separately, whether he shall be saved or not," in order that every man may be led to ask whether he is thus foreordained or not: but the apostle holds up before

[1] Briefe, iii, 355. Op. Ex., vi, 300. Briefe, iii, 392; v, 44. Op. Ex., ii, 172 sqq.

[2] Op. Ex., ii, 205 sq.

every man the Gospel and faith, and speaks of the government of God in the Church, according to which those who have the name of being the people of God are rejected on account of their unbelief, and others, formerly unbelieving, now become through faith in Christ the true Church, so that the unbelief of the former is entirely to blame for their rejection. But here, again, Luther by no means denies the foreordination spoken of. He only asserts that God and the apostles would not have us attempt to pry into it. The term "*Versehung*" is here, for Luther, entirely synonymous with "predestination," or "eternal election," since it combines in one the conceptions of the foreknowledge and the purpose of God.[1]

We turn now to a closer examination of the most comprehensive of Luther's utterances upon this subject, *i. e.*, that occurring in the *Latin Commentary upon Genesis, Chap. xxvi.*[2] It will be found in full accord with all that has been above presented. It is reported, he says, that among the nobility and prominent men of the day[3] outrageous utterances are being circulated concerning predestination, or divine foreknowledge, as though, if one be predestinated (to salvation) he will be saved, whether his conduct be good or evil; and, if not predestinated, he will be eternally lost, without regard to his own deeds. Against this he argues: According to such reasoning the incarnation and work of Christ, the Holy Scriptures, and the sacraments would be utterly robbed of their significance for us. A man who was predestinated to salvation would thus be saved without the Son or the means of grace. And of what benefit would the sacraments be, if they are "uncertain and useless in the very matter of our salvation"? We charge God with folly in the sending of His Son, His Law and His Gospel, when we represent that He meant thereby to accomplish nothing more than that we should be uncertain, and doubt whether we should be saved or damned. Hence, such suggestions are Satanic delusions. To them we must oppose the true and secure knowledge of Christ, laying firm hold of the promises of God. If God should not abide by His

[1] Briefe, v, 754. Erl. Ed., ix, 9 sqq. [2] Op. Ex., vi, 290–300.

[3] Cf. the letter of Dec. 28, 1542, to the Count of Mansfeld, Briefe, v, 512 sq. It was at just about this time that Luther composed this part of his commentary; and the reference to the transactions concerning the town of Wurzen (Op. Ex., vi, 333) also indicates A. D. 1542 or 1543.

promises, it would be all over with our salvation; but we have this consolation, that in the midst of our mutability we can find refuge in the immutability of God (cf. Rom. xi. 29). He has, therefore, says he, in his book, *De servo arbitrio*, and elsewhere called attention to the distinction which must be observed when treating of the knowledge (*notitia*), or, to speak more properly, of the personality (*de subjecto*) of the Deity, *i. e.*, we must treat either of the hidden or of the revealed God; and as to the former, we can have no faith, no knowledge and no apprehension, but must allow the secrets of God to remain concealed from us. Thus Jesus (Acts i. 7), to the inquiry of the disciples whether it was predestinated that the kingdom should then be established, replied that it was not for them to know the time. It is the desire of God that we should allow Him to remain hidden where He has not revealed Himself to us. Yet He has sought, from the very beginning, to anticipate our curious questionings, and has hence set before us His will and counsel, as follows: "I will reveal to thee foreknowledge and predestination in an excellent way, but not in the way of carnal wisdom, as thou dost vainly expect. Thus will I do: I will, from an unrevealed God, become a God revealed, and yet remain the same God. I will come into the flesh, or send to you my Son, who will die for thy sins and rise again. Thus will I fulfil thy desire, that thou mayest know whether thou art predestinated or not. Listen to Him. Look upon Him, as He lies in the manger, etc. * * * There thou shalt certainly apprehend me. When thou hast heard Him, art baptized in His name, and shalt love His Word, then art thou certainly predestinated, and sure of thine eternal salvation. But if thou despisest the Word, then art thou certainly under eternal condemnation." God, adds Luther, did not descend from heaven in order to make thee uncertain about predestination, to teach thee contempt for the sacraments, absolution, and the other divine ordinances. On the contrary, He has established these for the very purpose of making thee perfectly certain and taking out of thy heart the disease of doubt; so that thou mightest not only believe with thy heart, but also see with thine eyes and grasp with thy hands. Why dost thou reject this, and complain that thou knowest not whether thou art predestinated? To meet the case of such as doubt whether they really believe, and distress themselves with the thought that they *cannot* believe,

he relates how he, upon one occasion, dealt with a woman who was in such a pitiable state of mind. He repeated the articles of faith one by one, and asked her in regard to each one, whether she acknowledged it to be true. She assented to the truth of them all, but still professed to be unable to believe it. He then pronounced the latter impression a Satanic delusion, and set her mind at rest in regard to her fancied unbelief; for, if any one does not doubt that the Son of God has died for him, he certainly believes it. Should some one further object, that he does not know whether he shall remain in the faith, Luther is ready with the reply: Take to yourself the present promise and predestination, and ask no questions about the hidden counsel of God. Acceptest thou the Word of the revealed God, it will continually reveal to thee also the hidden God, for "He who sees me, sees also the Father" (John xiv. 9). Clingest thou with firm faith to the revealed God, so that thy heart is fully persuaded that thou shalt not lose Christ, even though all else be taken from thee, then art thou most certainly predestinated, and thou shalt know the hidden God—yea, thou knowest Him now, if thou knowest the Son and His purpose to be to thee thy Lord and Saviour; for thus thou art certain that God is also thy Lord and Father. Most urgently does Luther repeat, that we are to cling to Christ alone, and not ourselves ascend to heaven. "If thou hast Him, then hast thou also the hidden God equally with the revealed." He then again cites the very immutability of God as a ground of rejoicing for us, *i. e.*, that God is immutable, that He works with immutable necessity, and cannot deny Himself, but keeps His promises. He declares, in conclusion, that he has been very anxious to present the instructions and admonitions here given, because he foresees that many will after his death appeal to his own books in support of the errors in question. He has, for example, among other things, written that "all things are absolute and necessary"; but he then also immediately added, that we must look upon the revealed God, of whom we sing: "Jesus Christ it is, Of Sabaoth Lord." But perverse men will pass by all such passages, and eagerly seize upon those which relate to the hidden God. His readers are therefore cautioned to remember that he also taught that we ought not to endeavor to fathom the predestination of the hidden God, but be content with the predestination which is revealed

through the call and ministry of the Word. This, he holds, should free him from the charge of encouraging such errors.

This leading passage from Luther's later writings must, as has been said, be kept in view in connection with the utterances upon the same subject previously cited. Here, as before, he recognizes the hidden will and the eternal foreordination. Here, too, all things occurring in time follow from this postulate by immutable necessity. The proposition touching the necessity of all events, which he does not recall, but from which he merely turns the attention at once upon the revealed will of God, is here applied even to the fact of the salvation of some whilst others are unsaved. He allows also the association, as equivalents, of the terms, "predestination" and "foreknowledge", to pass without objection. He here, indeed, repeatedly makes the striking statement, that to those who accept the God revealed in Christ, the hidden God will also reveal Himself with His predestination; but in this he means to say no more than that those who actually believe and persevere in their faith will become more and more fully assured of their own predestination. But to whom, in accordance with the immutable counsel of God, will it, by awakening, regenerating, preserving grace, *be made inwardly possible* also to accept the Word preached to all and to persevere in their faith? To this question we here, again, fail to receive the desired answer. Luther merely exhorts to such an acceptance, giving to those who already believe upon the Son of God crucified for them, and are yet in doubt through the secret suggestions of the devil only in regard to their own faith, the assurance of the actual existence of their faith—admonishes all to cling continually to the revealed God, and be assured also of continuous protection by Him—and urges the certainty of those promises of God in Christ which apply precisely to such as believe upon Christ and abide in fellowship with Him. Does he, then, take it for granted that what he thus demands of men in the name of God will be also made inwardly possible to all? Or is there still also, as openly affirmed in the pamphlet against Erasmus, an inability to accept and an inability to persevere, based upon an immutable decree of God? Luther did not affirm the former, nor did he either assert or deny the latter, although in the problem with which he was dealing, and in the ungodly inferences which he was combating, this question must of necessity have often forced

itself upon his attention. Indeed, he does not, in this passage, even repeat his former utterances concerning an eternal will of God, according to which He desires the salvation *of all*—and does not even cite such sweeping texts of Scripture among the promises to which appeal is here taken.

We are still further justified, finally, in the suggestion of such questions, by other utterances of the Reformer and by further characteristics of his doctrinal method. The question was at one time put directly to him, "*why one hears and another does not hear.*" To this he does not reply that, since God in the very preaching of the Word makes it possible also for all hearers to believe, the explanation is to be found in the personal decision of each individual hearer, but he merely says: We have no commandment of God to know this, and hence it is not for us to inquire about it.[1] If we, then, still further inquire, whether the reason why many do not listen to the Word does not lie in God's own will and working, inasmuch as He does not grant them faith or that possibility of believing which can result only through His spiritual agency, Luther himself appears to lead to the conclusion thus suggested, repeating here, as he does, an utterance which we felt ourselves fully justified in thus interpreting when met with in another connection. He had, in 1525, declared: "In the Word comes the Spirit, and gives faith where and to whom He will." Thus, also, we now read in the *Marburg Articles:* "The Holy Spirit gives, *as He will*, faith into our hearts, when we hear the Gospel of Christ"; and, still more definitely, in the *Schwabach Articles:* "God gives faith by His Holy Spirit through the Word as a means, *as and where* He will"; and in the *Augsburg Confession:* "God gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith where and when He will (*ubi et quando, visum est Deo*) in those who hear the Gospel." In similar spirit, Luther says in his letter of A. D. 1537 to the Swiss: I see no defect in the first of your articles, treating of the oral Word; for the Holy Spirit must work inwardly upon the hearts of the hearers, and the external Word alone accomplishes nothing. Otherwise, all would become believers who hear the Word; * * * but that the oral Gospel is called the Word and power of God (Rom *i.* 16), as that by which God calls and draws *whom He will* through His Holy

[1] Briefe, iii, 393 sq.

Spirit.[1] In these confessions, it is the aim of the language employed, as is evident particularly in the *Augsburg Confession*, to exclude the idea, that merit of any kind upon our part attracts to us the power of the Holy Spirit. Nor is it at all implied, upon the other hand, that God is ready in His free grace to grant to the hearts of all hearers, in any way and at any time, at least the possibility of believing, and that their unbelief comes in this way to be their own fault. Yet the thought of such a further definition must have been naturally suggested in the conflict with Zwingli and the Swiss as a means of repelling their more decided predestination. In entire harmony with the above utterances is the doctrine of Luther, to which our attention is to be yet further directed, concerning the inner condition of the individual himself in whom the Spirit does or does not work faith through the Word. In addition to all the above, we recall, finally, the emphasis with which Luther, in a letter to Capito in 1537, reaffirms his adherence to the positions taken in his publication against Erasmus. He in this letter withholds his approval from the proposed collection of his writings, and professes, rather, a saturnine hunger to devour them all. Then he adds: "I do not know any book of mine that is right, unless, perhaps, *De servo arbitrio* and the Catechism."[2]

To what conclusion are we, then, finally brought in regard to the mutual relation between the two phases of Luther's doctrine concerning God?

Must we not, after all, think of them as always, in Luther's conception, perfectly united, as the matter had undeniably been represented in his earlier writings, especially in the *De servo arbitrio?* In that case, we would be compelled to interpret his meaning more specifically as follows: If, according to the *De servo arbitrio*, a will of God, that all shall be saved, is to be proclaimed without any limitations, God then only allows this to be proclaimed without Himself really having such a will. God, in Himself, really wills that some shall be saved and others lost; and He accomplishes this will, moreover, by making the preached Word effective in the one class, while not making an escape from the inherited condemnation in any way inwardly possible for others. The declaration, that God wishes to save all if they

[1] Vid. Vol. I., p. 500. Erl. Ed., lxv, 89; xxiv, 325. Briefe, v, 85.

[2] Briefe, v, 70.

believe upon Christ, means therefore, in fact, that He wishes to save them, in so far as He Himself shall effect in them the required state of mind. God bids us to proclaim such a general will to save, in order then, through the attractive power of this proclamation, to awaken faith in those whom alone He has predestinated to salvation. The same object is had in view in commanding men to believe, in the issuing of which commandment God Himself knows and purposes that not all can obey it. God is faithful to His promises, since He always affixes to them the condition that they are to be accepted in faith, and since He certainly bestows what is promised upon those in whom He works and preserves faith. The unbelieving are guilty, since their evil will, although God Himself withholds from them the possibility of escaping from it, is yet always their own will. Luther now declared, with great positiveness, that if we fix our eyes, and keep them fixed, upon Christ, God will make us entirely certain of our eternal salvation, or of our predestination to it, although he had at an earlier period asserted that, according to Prov. xi. 4 sq., we must labor without knowing the future.[1] But we would still, in accordance with this, be compelled to acknowledge that it yet remains uncertain whether we will always be in a state to fulfil the condition affixed. He now points with very special emphasis, as was not previously the case, to the sacraments, specifying particularly the "certain and clear" promise given us in baptism as one which we should firmly grasp.[2] What he now says of "seeing with the eyes and grasping with the hands" sounds as though, in fact, a sign from heaven, such as he has forbidden us to desire, had, after all, been granted us by God's free grace in the sacraments. But here, again, we would be compelled to add, that God will nevertheless make possible only to some the required believing reception of the sacraments, the continuous apprehension of the baptismal promise, etc. Just in this way we would find it necessary to interpret the utterances concerning God's loving will. Similarly, also, all the declarations concerning the heart of God, and even concerning God Himself as being love, could be really applicable only to that heart of God which He cherishes toward the "some" whom He has foreordained to eternal salvation.

[1] Vol. I., p. 330.

[2] Cf. especially also Op. Ex., v, 178.

If it were our task to show how—if it were necessary to harmonize and reconcile with one another at any price the mutually opposing statements—a reconciliation could at all be thought of, we might be actually inclined to seek it at the expense of the first-mentioned class. But the question before us is, whether, and how, both sides were reconciled in Luther's consciousness and in his teaching. And it is to be here remembered, first of all, that Luther himself in his later years never actually presented any such solution of the problem. Such was not the solitary utterance found, without further specifications, in the comment upon Isa. x. 15—that we cannot even do evil without the stimulating power of God. In connection with the proposition, that "all things are necessary," the question yet remains, whether this cannot, by some sort of further reservation, be harmonized with the proclamation of the revealed God, to whom we are much rather to cling. The matter is certainly presented in a different way in the repeated and clear declarations of the *earlier* Luther. But, granting that the strong and unlimited proposition expressed at least his privately-entertained dogmatic view, let the attempt then be made, also, to reconcile this interpretation of his words with the whole character of his preaching and of the man himself. Let the joyous, hearty, exultant tone in which he presented to his hearers, as universal in their scope, the blessed promises of God, and the lofty and impressive earnestness with which he, by persuasion and rebuke, sought to encourage all to their acceptance, be regarded in connection with the dogmatic conviction, always at the same time entertained, that he was urging many, perhaps the majority, of his hearers to do that which was simply impossible for them—that he was consequently asserting infinitely more than could properly be asserted. When referring to the death of Christ, he *always merely affirms* that Christ died for *all*, although this, if the fruit of His death was absolutely denied to so many, could no longer have any significance. He never, in such connection, indicates any limitation, or reservation, although he might have supported such a limitation by Christ's "for many," not "for all," in Matt. xx. 28 and xxvi. 28. The greatest importance attaches, finally, to the utterances in regard to the *nature of God* as revealing Himself in Christ. In Christ, the Saviour, the Son of love, is the entire God. Here we look into the heart of God; here we see that His very nature is simple and eternal

love. Nor can the force of these declarations be at all broken by the reflection, that Luther describes the *essence* (*Substanz*) *of the hidden God* not at all as love, but as power; for love must, in any case, be regarded as existing in the essential God, since He has provided salvation for at least some men. We cannot, therefore, understand the description referred to as a full description of God in His essential character, but only as a designation of that which we find in God when we depend upon our own speculations instead of upon the revealed Word. The two conceptions may, therefore, be harmonized by maintaining that God, who is at all events essentially and fundamentally power, nevertheless, as is however revealed to us only in the Gospel, under the promptings of His heart employs His power only in sincere love. Thus, again, we learn in respect to the *majesty* of God, in which we can without revelation discover only terrible power, that we in Christ look also into its very depths—even that in Christ Himself it proffers itself to us with all its blessings, thus proving itself also a majesty of beneficent love.[1] As the hidden God, with His power, so also the love of God, is designated as boundless and unfathomable. It is an "abyss" of the paternal heart revealing itself to us.[2] Luther thus frequently calls the love of God directly his "nature."[3] Hence he says[4] that in Moses, the proclaimer of the Law, we do not as yet hear God Himself, since God cannot speak in any other way than that which comports with the character of His own nature (*denn er von Natur geartet ist*).

In any such attempts at reconciliation, we must to the utterances concerning the "own natural" works of God at once append the opposing statements, that, according to Luther, killing and condemning to perdition are no less truly *God's work*, and that it was even His *purpose* from eternity thus to deal with the majority of the race. To the assertion, likewise, that God only "simulates wrath," we must at once add that, in truth, His merely simulating is itself a simulation of the God who so speaks while secretly thinking otherwise. We have called attention to the fact that Luther himself nowhere presents any such harmonizing of his utterances. We now recall, however, as looking in that direction, the passage in the *House Postils* which pronounces

[1] Supra, p. 280. Erl. Ed., viii, 165. [2] Erl. Ed., xv, 238.
[3] Erl. Ed., vii, 159; xxxiv, 206. [4] Vid. supra, p. 232.

ungodly the opinion that God Himself is willing to allow but few to experience His grace. It is a statement which seems to be required in all its force, and without reservation, by the doctrine of the loving nature of God.

So great and irremovable are the difficulties attending the theory, that Luther, in his own mind, reconciled the two features of this doctrine in the way suggested. Not only does the doctrine which such a method develops arouse suspicion on its own account, but the attributing of it to Luther can scarcely be justified. He might, indeed, have entertained such a view, whatever objections may to us seem to lie against it; but his entire doctrinal method stands opposed to the theory. Under these circumstances, it cannot surprise us that a solution directly opposite to the above should have been attempted. Some theologians, both of ancient and of modern times, reconcile the genuine proffer of salvation to all with predestination by assuming that the fate of those who are not saved has been decreed by God from eternity because He from eternity foresaw that they would not avail themselves of that acceptance of salvation made possible also for them. Upon this theory, indeed, the possibility of the divine foreknowledge and, at the same time, of a free decision upon man's part for or against the reception of the offered grace still remains an unfathomable mystery; but the position is thus maintained, that God's own absolute will in no case makes from the first impossible the acceptance of the proffer which He presents with such apparent earnestness. The attempt has accordingly been made to attribute to Luther the theory, that the will of God in accordance with which salvation has been secretly ordained for only a portion of the hearers of the Word remains, indeed, eternally immutable, but was originally thus determined only upon the basis of this foreknowledge. For such a view may be adduced utterances of Luther himself in one of his consolatory letters.[1] He here again says that God, it is true, before the foundation of the world elected and appointed (*destinasse*) some men to eternal life, rejecting others. He then points, however, as elsewhere, at once away from the hidden God to Christ, out of whose hand no one can snatch His sheep.

[1] Briefe, vi, 427 sqq. The letter is without a date, but was, at all events, written in the latter portion of Luther's life. The second version of the letter, Briefe, vi, 429 sq, is merely a corruption of the first.

But he further declares: But those of whom it is said, "They went out from us," etc. (1 John ii. 19), went out of their own will (*voluntate*), fell of their own will. And, because they were foreknown as of those who would fall, they were not predestinated (to salvation); but they would have been predestinated if they had been of those who would return and remain in holiness and truth. Is not the non-predestination of the latter persons traced simply to a foreknowledge of their own conduct? Cannot the same be said also of those who do not at all enter upon the fellowship offered them? Must not, consequently, the "rejection of the others" be throughout regarded as based upon such foreknowledge? But to these questions we must immediately reply, that the last quotation loses its evidential force at once, when viewed in the light of Luther's further utterances concerning the hidden and the revealed will of God. The question thus again arises: Is this not spoken from the standpoint of the God revealed and to be preached? Had God, according to His hidden will, really given to such persons the possibility of not falling? Did He not merely foresee what He had also, at the same time, Himself determined according to His hidden will—what could not, indeed, in consequence of His foreknowledge, have happened otherwise? It would be incomprehensible, that Luther, if he already had this theory worked out in his own mind, should have yet employed the terms "prescience" and "predestination" as perfectly synonymous, and that he should never, in dealing with persons who, in accordance with the eternal foreknowledge of God as well as His eternal will, had fallen upon a theory of predestination leading either to despair or to utter frivolity, have openly and plainly declared the divine will to be simply the result of *such* a foreknowledge as still left open to *all* hearers of the Word the possibility of its reception.

Those who attribute to Luther the former of the theories above mentioned can at least reply to the objection, that he himself never plainly presented such an explanation of the difficulty, that he presented such views distinctly enough in his earlier writings, and refrained from doing so at a later date only because the doctrine then appeared to him too severe and harsh for his hearers and readers. Those who would ascribe to him the second theory are utterly unable to explain why he never developed it, never even presented it as plainly as possible, and never

by it carefully corrected his own earlier teachings, of the perils connected with which he was so well aware. To ascribe this theory to him, in the face of such facts, is a display of audacity which may be understood, indeed, in the zealous advocates of the theory itself, but which can never be justified by a candid historical examination of the utterances of Luther.

But what is, then, the real state of the case? How did Luther reconcile the two aspects of the subject? How did he solve the contradiction which, so far as we can see, confronts us when we place side by side the passages of his writings which point in the two opposite directions?

The fact is, Luther *never worked out for himself* any such theory of reconciliation, never attempted any solution of the problem. It was his teaching, that *our power of apprehension does not extend so far—that we must be satisfied to accept even the incomprehensible and inexplicable;* for Luther fails to find any such harmonizing suggestions in the revealed Word of God. He himself asserts, that there remains for us a contradiction which we cannot and should not attempt to solve. Thus, for example, in a passage above cited concerning the "secret election," which he admits, but which he refuses to find exemplified in the case of the souls saved in the ark, he says: "This we are not able to comprehend in our minds, and it seems to us in conflict with the revealed will of God." Yet how little he hesitates to place side by side, without any attempt at reconciliation, statements which for us appear to be mutually contradictory, may be strikingly seen in his declaration: "Although God foreknows all things, and all things must come to pass according to His will, nevertheless the salvation of all men is the earnest will of God." [1] In direct opposition, even, to all such harmonizing theories as we might be disposed to frame for our own satisfaction, we must always bear in mind the frequently-repeated admonitions: "Do not pry into things too high for thee," etc.[2] "There is no science and no knowledge of God, in so far as He has not been revealed." [3] We must even apply to them what Luther bluntly says in regard to speculations concerning the divine majesty: "It is impossible that they should be true." [4]

[1] Briefe, iii, 355. Supra, pp. 288, 294.

[2] Luther still (vid. Vol. I., p. 330) is particularly fond of quoting Prov. xxv, 27; Ecclesiasticus iii, 22. Cf. Briefe, iv, 247; v, 514.

[3] Op. Ex., vi, 292. Supra, p. 297.

[4] Op. Ex., ii, 205.

If it be still objected, that our minds cannot possibly, in view of divinely implanted intellectual impulse, necessity and aspirations, be satisfied while such an evident contradiction faces them, Luther, in reply, simply denies our right to entertain such ambitious aspirations after knowledge. It is from just such intellectual strivings that he would divert our attention, in order to fix it upon those practical religious aspirations whose aim and object God has plainly enough set before us. He thus commends to us the fixing of the eye simply and directly upon Christ, a direct grasping of the blessings of salvation offered in the Word and sacraments. Accordingly, he makes it now his own most solemn aim, as preacher and teacher, above all else to lay most earnestly upon the hearts of all the objectively proffered grace of God, in order that faith may thereby be awakened.

We repeat once more, however, that there is nevertheless clearly traceable a *significant modification* of the earlier representations of Luther in the mutual relation of the two contrasted aspects of the subject before us. The emphasis laid upon the first aspect has now become so decided, that it leads him even to appropriate without comment those passages of Scripture which announce it as the will of God that all men should be saved.[1] On the other hand, he now no longer carries out the idea of the hidden God, and His will, to such conclusions as he had formerly drawn from it, and as he had transferred to the sphere of the divine will manifested in revelation. We no longer meet the declarations: that God Himself desires (wills) the death of the sinner, whose life He professes to desire; that God, although, as incarnate, weeping over the destruction of sinners, yet at the same time, simply in accordance with His own purpose (*Vorsatz*), abandons a number of such to destruction; that, although He does not will sin, He nevertheless ordains it; that He, by virtue of His own will, consigns us of necessity to perdition.[2] Even in documents designed only for theologians, we no longer meet with such expressions. To the preacher, for example, who wished to know why not all would listen to the Gospel, he does not present the clear and direct reply given in his publication against Erasmus, but warns him against any attempt to solve the mystery. Finally, in all his utterances concerning the entrance of the first sin

[1] Cf. especially, supra, p. 287 sqq. [2] Vol. I., pp. 492, 499, 495.

through Adam, Luther carefully refrains from the suggestion of any question which might lead to the tracing of this sin to the divine will.[1] In view of all the above, we must regard the opinion of his *De servo arbitrio*, expressed by Luther in his letter to Capito, as referring only to the vigorous denunciation of human power and human merit which it contains, and not to its further and positive declarations concerning the hidden will of God.

We detect thus a difference between the earlier and the later doctrinal utterances of Luther, only relative, it is true, and somewhat wavering, yet deeply rooted in the peculiar course through which his doctrinal views in general attained their maturity, and in their inmost character. Luther had previously, controlled entirely by his thoroughgoing antagonism to the Pelagianism of the Romish Church, without any hesitancy adopted, as the basis of such antagonism, metaphysical statements concerning God and the divine agency, which were manifestly derived, not from the revealed Word, but from the fundamental conceptions of omnipotence and absolute will as inherent in the nature of the absolute God. Now, the same conception of the reality of the proffer of salvation in the *means of grace* which he exalted in his controversy with the Fanatics made itself felt in connection with his own doctrine of the divine being and attributes to such an extent that he no longer, as formerly, looked beyond it to scrutinize the inscrutable will of God and its relation to the plan of salvation. Now, the distinguishing central point of his Christian faith, namely, *Christ* and the *sincere love of God manifested in Him*, so completely dominated his entire personal apprehension and presentation of doctrine that the inferences formerly deduced from the divine power, lying as they do beyond the sphere of the general religious consciousness and the natural reason, were driven into the background—not, indeed, reconciled to the satisfaction of our weak powers of apprehension, but at least put to silence—and the eyes were turned, with a determined persistence not before manifested, away from the dark abyss of mystery to the blessed light emanating from the great central truth. He now, whenever our own speculations show a tendency to dwell upon the questions beyond our grasp, applies with

[1] Cf., on the other hand, supra. p. 488 sq.

greater logical consistency than heretofore the principle, that we must abide simply by the *Word of Scripture*. And, although he yet speaks most decidedly of the pure and free exercise of the divine power in the imparting of salvation, and that in such a way that the earlier positions now no longer avowed may *to us* appear to be necessary inferences or premises, although no longer so deduced by him; yet it must now be evident to all that the controlling thought here is not the metaphysical idea of absolute power or divine foreknowledge, but an antagonism to all human merit which is based upon practical religious interest, and a longing desire for a deliverance proceeding entirely from God and thus bearing with it a positive assurance for our faith.

Such is, historically deduced and apprehended, the position maintained by Luther. To pass dogmatic judgment upon it is not our present task. The points discussed are among the most difficult presented in the theology of the Reformer, constituting perhaps its most profound problem. We have dwelt upon them here at length, although, in doing so, we have been compelled to avail ourselves in some cases of material which might more appropriately have been introduced at a later point. We were able to do this, partly, because the subjects found points of attachment in our still earlier discussions; and we were compelled to do so, as otherwise the most important questions concerning Luther's doctrine touching the cognizability, nature and character of God must have been dismembered in treatment.[1]

2. *The Trinity.*

REVEALED THROUGH INCARNATION—ESTABLISHED BY SCRIPTURE—OBJECTIONS OF REASON—THE SON AS WORD AND AS LIKENESS—BIRTH OF SON—PROCESSION OF SPIRIT—PRE-EMINENCE OF FATHER—WORK AND ATTRIBUTES OF EACH PERSON—ANALOGIES IN NATURE.

Through Christ, the Saviour, as Luther says, are we to look into the heart of God. The revelation of salvation in Christ is

[1] The very excellent and meritorious publications upon this problem, J. Müller, Lutheri de prædest. et lib. arbitrio doctrina, 1832, and Lütkens, Luthers Prædestinations-lehre, 1858, while developing the second-mentioned aspect of the doctrine with strict historical impartiality, have not given the first aspect its proper recognition—nor have I myself given to this aspect sufficient attention in my article in Herzog's Theol. Encyclop., viii. 614.

the CENTRAL POINT OF VIEW from which we gain a further outlook upon the mystery of the Trinity. The revelation of the latter "follows, and bursts upon us, from the supreme work of God," the incarnation of His Son for our reconciliation. No being inferior to God Himself could accomplish such reconciliation. Only through an eternal, divine person, having power over sin and death, could the latter be blotted out of existence. But the person through whom the reconciliation was to be effected must be some other than the person of the Father who was to be reconciled. To this unity of essence and this distinction of persons testimony is borne, according to Luther, already in the Old Testament, and fully in the New. The eternity and divinity of the Son he argues particularly from the creation of the world through the Word, or Son—from which it follows, that the latter was, before the existence of any created thing (and hence before the beginning of time, and eternally) with the Father, and that, as there can be no third form of existence, after God and created things, He is Himself also God. In treating of the Holy Spirit, Luther dwells especially upon the intimate connection of faith in the full divinity of the Spirit with the inmost character of the entire faith and life of Christianity; whilst he at the same time deduces from the language of Scripture a personal difference between the Spirit and the Father and Son. Moreover, that which is said to be accomplished by the Spirit can, according to Luther, be effected only by God, *e. g.*, the inward illumination of the heart, the awakening of faith, the strengthening of the conscience against the terrors of the devil and all created things. The Spirit is therefore also the real and true God. The saying of Jesus: "He will take of mine" (John xvi. 15), is to be understood as furnishing further evidence. We are not to imagine a part severed from the deity. The latter does not in any case allow itself to be divided into parts; but where there is one part that belongs to God, there the entire divinity is assuredly present. Among the principal proof-passages for the position that the Holy Spirit is "a different (*unterschiedene*) and other person from the Father and the Son" are the sayings of Jesus, in the Gospel of John, concerning the procession and mission of the Spirit, His character as the Comforter, etc. He regards as of special weight the revelation at the baptism of Jesus. It is evident, on this occasion, that the Spirit who descends in visible

form is "something other in His person than either the Father or the Son." Luther also stoutly maintained that the Holy Spirit proceeds, not alone from the Father, but from the Father and the Son. This he argues from the utterances of Scripture above referred to, regarded as revealing the relation between the persons within the Trinity. It is thus by the Son, according to John xv. 26, that the Spirit is sent, although He at the same time proceeds from the Father. His being sent is the same thing as His proceeding. According to John xvi. 15, He receives His divine nature in eternity, not alone from the Father, but also from the Son. The same thing is proved by the designation of the Holy Spirit of adoption as, at the same time, the Spirit of Christ. And it is just here that we may note the deep significance in the matter of the Christian's salvation which lies, for Luther, in this relation of the Spirit to the Son: for the office of the Spirit must, accordingly, be nothing else than to glorify Christ, and hence we become partakers of the Spirit whenever we lay hold upon Christ in faith. In this trinity of persons, however, God is, for him, "one most simple essence"—a God "most simple in simplicity and most one (*unissima*) in unity."[1]

Luther evidently never entertained any doubt that the doctrine of the Trinity, as firmly established in the Church, was REQUIRED BY THE STATEMENTS OF THE SCRIPTURES and by the entire consensus of scriptural Christian faith. Nor did he at any time fail to insist in his sermons upon those propositions concerning the nature of God in which he recognized the objective basis of the doctrine of salvation. He was early stimulated to greater zeal in the presentation of these doctrines by his fears of a fresh outbreak of the Arian heresy. He, at a later day, more distinctly asserts that danger in this direction is to be apprehended, especially from the Italian grammarians, or rhetoricians, and also from certain German-Italian serpents—from Epicureans and sceptics. On the other hand, says he, this article has remained pure in the Papacy and among the scholastic theologians, so that we have with them here no controversy.[2] We have already called attention to his decided adoption, especially, of the Athanasian symbol.

[1] Erl. Ed., ix, 5 sq.; x, 165 sqq.; xi, 246 sq.; xv, 134 sqq.; xlv, 295 sqq., 315 sqq.; xvi, 213.—xlix, 390 sq.; l, 94; ix, 6. Briefe, iv, 550. Erl. Ed., l, 92, 83; vii, 274. Op. Ex., vi, 35, 327.

[2] Erl. Ed., xv, 336. Briefe, iv, 427 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxvii, 53.

At the same time, he dismisses all the OBJECTIONS OF REASON, and reminds his readers that we must here speak with new tongues.[1] Thus the unity of God is, for him, a unity of an entirely peculiar kind, with no parallel anywhere among created things, higher than mathematical unity. He confesses, however, at the same time, that human terms and ecclesastical formulæ are, in any event, incapable of expressing it. We can only, says he, prattle like little children about these things. It would even be better that all the subtle expressions concerning the distinctions of the persons in the unity of essence and agency should be confined to the schools, if the efforts of the devil to spread heresy did not make it necessary, especially for teachers, to discuss them publicly. If any one still find them too difficult, let him, with the children, stick to the catechism. It is no wonder if our thoughts sometimes go astray as we ponder these questions, or our words miss the mark; and such splinters will not harm us, if we only cling firmly to the foundation of our faith: Three persons in the one Godhead; each person perfect God; the persons not commingled; the essence not divided. Of the attempts of a Scotus and others to make the doctrine more acceptable to reason by the conception of "formal and real distinctions," etc., Luther will hear nothing. Dialectics must here keep silence.[2] We find him referring several times to the scholastic question, whether it should be held, with Peter the Lombard, that "divine essence neither is begotten nor begets." In one of his early writings, he cites this maxim as an example of empty human ordinances. Later, as casually remarked above, he declares the conclusion, that the essence begets, a false one. Still later, he again declares that the Lombard was not justified in defending that proposition, but should have considered that the term "essence" in this doctrine is to be understood relatively. We may infer his own tendency from the added remark, that there was no occasion to make such an outcry over this one word.[3]

Of such philosophical ventures of his own as we found in the *Christmas Sermon of A. D. 1515*,[4] we afterwards find no trace

[1] Vid. supra, p. 267.

[2] Jena, i, 572 sqq. Erl. Ed., iv, 137; xxxvii, 45, 53.

[3] Op. Ex., xvi, 330 sqq. Jen., i, 567 b, 572.

[4] Vol. I., p. 128 sqq.

in Luther's writings. He seeks to abide simply by the Scriptures. Starting, however, with the same utterances of Scripture upon which his argument was then based, we find him afterwards continually striving to attain a rich, vivid and profound portrayal of the relationship within the Trinity, especially of the relation between the Son and the Father, as suggested by the idea of the express image, brightness of the Father's glory, etc. He says, further, of these scriptural declarations themselves, as also, for example, of the expressions, "mission, procession of the Spirit," that they aim to give us the truth in pictures. The three persons are represented to us through comparisons or pictures of natural things, so that we may in our weakness grasp the ideas and speak of them—may not fathom nor comprehend them, but only hold by faith to the words of revelation.[1]

He regards of special importance in gaining a proper conception of the Son, the description of Him by John as the WORD.[2] We are here to think of a conversation of God within Himself, just as a man may continually have a word, conversation, or thought with himself in his heart. And he speaks especially of the conversation of the human heart, as moved by love, anger, joy or sorrow. Here, says he, we find even in ourselves a powerful and violent conversation. Our heart is entirely carried away with love or anger. We cannot with our senses attain to the height or magnitude of the word of the heart. Man cannot himself pour out his whole heart. Yet this is, after all, only a very weak and dim illustration of the Word of God. This includes the entire God, is as great and perfect as God Himself, yea, is God Himself.

Yet this Word is, at the same time, personally discriminated from God. For this purpose He employs, as an illustration, the word of man as a spoken word. The word and he who utters it are not one person. Thus John says: "The Word was *with* God." He is another person than the Father, with whom He was. We, with the Fathers, employ to express this the term, "person"; for we have no other suitable term, and it means

[1] Erl. Ed., l, 83.

[2] For subsequent context, compare especially Erl. Ed., xlv, 295 sqq.; x, 165 sqq.; xv, 134 sqq.; xxiii, 270 sqq.; vii, 188 sqq. Cf. also again the Christmas sermon.

nothing more than a "*hypostasis*," a being (*Wesen*) or essence (*Substanz*), which exists of itself and which is God.

Luther finds the relation of the Spirit to the Father and Son also, according to John xvi. 13, set forth in this conversation of God within Himself.[1] Where there is a speaker and a word, there should also be a hearer. This is here the Holy Spirit. And the speaking, the being spoken, and the hearing, all occur within the divine nature.

With the idea of the Word is immediately connected that of the LIKENESS. Every word is a sign, which signifies something. The word of man carries with it the nature of the heart, although of course only symbolically. The speech is an image, or likeness, of the heart. In the case of God, that which is signified is also entirely and essentially in the sign, or in the Word and image. In God, the Word carries the whole nature with it.

By this Word, furthermore, were all things created, as John teaches: "In Him was life," etc. Luther pursues the line of these declarations further, adducing the statements of Prov. viii. concerning Creative Wisdom, which he considers identical with the Son, or Word. But he refuses to entertain the idea that the Word is, in accordance with the declaration, "In Him was life," an image of all creatures, or, as it were, a store-house of images or ideas, in accordance with which the whole creation has been framed. The Gospel, says he, speaks as plainly as possible, and does not attempt to lead us into such minute and subtle studies.

Later, however, in his exposition of the Mosaic account of the creation, he accepts also this idea: "The Son has in Himself * * * also a pattern of all created things."[2]

The significance which Luther attaches to the Word brings us again to consider in a very special way the significance of the person of Christ, the Saviour. Here the Word spoken of has become man, with whom and in whom the very heart of God has "poured itself out." Finally, Luther refers[3] to the oral Word of Gospel preaching in illustrating the character of the Son as the Word. John, as a sermon of the *Church Postils*[4] declares, employed the figure of the Word to describe the Son, in order

[1] Erl. Ed., l, 82 sq.
[2] Op. Ex., i, 62 sq.
[3] Cf. Vol. I., p. 128.
[4] Erl. Ed., xv, 140 sq.

to involve the oral proclamation of the Gospel and to indicate its glory and power. God Himself is present with the Word in the mouth of man, by virtue of which the souls who believe it are transported into life eternal.

The idea of the image, and, what to Luther is the same thing, the "brightness of the glory," of God is developed by Luther particularly in the direction suggested by Heb. i. 3. He then, further, "with all ancient Fathers," embraces also the Holy Spirit in the simile of the radiance which comes, beyond question, from the sun. The Fathers, says he, compared the Father to the sun, the Son to the radiance, the Spirit to the heat.

The fundamental characteristic of the Second Person always continues to be, that He is "THE SON," BEGOTTEN, OR BORN, by the Father; and that of the HOLY SPIRIT, that He PROCEEDS from the Father and Son. The divine sonship finds an imperfect illustration in the ordinary relation of father and son. An earthly son receives his being (nature) from an earthly father, but only in part, whereas God the Father gives to the Son the entire divine nature. The Son is begotten of the Father (Ps. ii. 7) "eternally without interruption"; for before God, as Augustine rightly declares, there is neither past nor future, but all things are eternally present. We may hence also say: "The Son is always being born of the Father." With this eternal attribute of the Son, *i. e.*, that He is begotten, or born, and that of the Holy Spirit, *i. e.*, that He proceeds, corresponds also, according to Luther, the manner in which both are revealed and present themselves in bodily manifestation. The Son, who is born in eternity, is also born in the flesh; and the Holy Spirit "proceeds" in the form of the dove, the fiery tongues, etc. On this account it was most suitable that, not the first nor the third, but precisely the second person of the Godhead, should be born in the flesh.[1]

All these three persons have, therefore, a single nature. In each is the entire Godhead. But, at the same time, Luther again lays great emphasis upon the statement, "that *the Son and the Spirit nevertheless have what they have and are from the Father.*" Thus, the Son is God and Creator like the Father,

[1] Erl. Ed., xxiii, 268 sqq.; xlv, 295; vii, 189,-199. Op. Ex., xviii, 72 sqq. Jena, i, 573 b.

but He receives (has) all this from the Father, whereas the Father does not receive (have) it from the Son. In this he finds the reason why the terms "God, Almighty, Creator," are, in the Apostles' Creed, placed in connection with the Father, and not with the Son or Holy Spirit. It is designed in this way to indicate that THE FATHER IS THE ORIGIN, or source, of the Godhead. From this he draws conclusions, also, as to the appropriate form of address in prayer. Some people are perplexed, says he, to know whether they, in the "Our Father," address the person of the Father, or the entire divine Being. Such should firmly believe that what God does to His creatures, is done by all three persons of the Godhead without any distinction—that, as the Father, so also are the Son and the Holy Spirit, in inseparable unity, *our* God and *our* Father—that, consequently, we may rightfully address also Christ in this way, just as the Church sings of the Holy Spirit: "*Veni pater pauperum.*" But it is nevertheless more appropriate to observe, and not despise, the *order of the persons*, as the apostles do, and after them the Church, naming the person of the Father in prayer, as in the Lord's Prayer, etc. He is the origin, or fountain, of the divinity in the Son and the Spirit, and when He is mentioned they must also be understood to be included. Thus speak Peter and Paul: "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and Christ Himself, in the Gospel, always gives the place of pre-eminence to the Father, and ascribes all things to Him, although He at the same time says: "All that the Father has is mine." [1]

We have been confining our attention to the relations existing within the Trinity: the last remark leads us into the sphere of the OPERATIONS OF THE TRINITY UPON THINGS WITHOUT ITSELF. These "*opera ad extra*" are, as Luther holds in harmony with the teachers of the Church, "undivided." That is to say, whatever has been created was made by God the Father, Son and Spirit together, as one single God. This is the meaning of the proposition: "That, in relation to created things, not more than One God is to be reckoned." Creating is thus a work of the *entire* divine majesty. Even the humanity of Christ was *created* by the Father, Son and Spirit, although the person of the Son alone entered into union with it. Thus, also, was the dove which

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxvii, 51–60; iv, 145.

appeared at the baptism of Christ created by the entire Trinity, although the Holy Ghost alone descended in its form. We must here discriminate between creatures or works regarded *absolutely*, or as they are essentially, and the same works or creatures regarded *relatively*, or as God uses them in His dealings with us, *i. e.*, as signs. No less are the satisfaction for sin, which we attribute to Christ, and the bestowal of life, which we ascribe to the Holy Ghost, works of the One God.

Luther would, nevertheless, have us designate some of the works which thus all belong in common to the entire Godhead to the Father, as His particular (*sonderlich*) work, others to the Son, and others to the Spirit, as, respectively, their particular works; and these special works are to be a standing testimony that we are not to commingle nor confuse the persons in the Trinity. Thus, in the Apostles' Creed, creation is announced in connection with the person of the Father; in connection with the person of the Son, we think of redemption; and in connection with the Holy Spirit, we mention the remission of sins and the bestowal of life. The peculiar nature of the work which is ascribed to the Son, or to the Spirit, in unison with the other persons, corresponds, as we have seen, with the peculiar mode by which the Son entered the humanity of Jesus, and the peculiar way, connected also with outward signs, by which the Spirit *proceeded* into the world; and these latter modes of entrance, again, correspond with the preceding inter-trinitarian acts—the eternal generation and procession. The designation of the Father as the almighty Creator is, as we have seen, traced directly to the inter-trinitarian relationship, the creation being, "as the first work of the divine majesty toward created things," attributed to the Father, since He is also in the Trinity the first person and the source for the Son and Spirit.[1] Luther has in no passage attempted to give more accurate definitions of the marks of difference between these works of the three persons, effected, as he maintained with particular emphasis, by the One God.

From the discussion of the "*opera ad extra*," more specifically from the idea of the co-operation of the entire Trinity in the work of creation, Luther advances to the ascription of SEPARATE ATTRIBUTES specially to the SEPARATE PERSONS, although the former

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxvii, 42 sqq.; xvi, 79; iv, 145 sqq.

all really belong to each of the persons. His statements of this kind relating to the Son are based upon that which he had already found embraced in the conception of the "Word," and carry out the idea still further. And, as was the case with the similar definitions of Augustine and other ancient teachers, to whom he himself appeals, this differentiation of the attributes became merged in a general conception of the three persons as three fundamental elements (*Grundmomenten*) of One personal spirit and life. In relation to the work of creation in particular, power is predicated pre-eminently of the Father. In the Son, through whom all things are created, wisdom is represented. The Word is the eternal counsel of the Father; and we may, with the ancients, designate the Father in His relation to the Son, *mens*, while the Son is *intellectus*. To the Holy Ghost may be applied the declarations occurring in the narrative of the creation, that God regarded as good the world created through the Word, had pleasure in it, blessed it. This good-pleasure, or complacency, is nothing else than that God preserves created things and stands by them. But the Holy Spirit is the preservation and life of all things. The Scriptures ascribe to Him life and goodness (benevolence). The Holy Spirit is the Father's complacency, as the Word is his eternal counsel. "*Pater est mens, filius intellectus, spiritus sanctus voluntas.*"

In harmony with these conceptions, Luther finds in all separate created things HINTS AND ANALOGIES of the Trinity. To the Father, the almighty Creator, he traces the essence, or nature, (*substantia*) of every creature. To the Son, who is the image of God, or in whom is displayed "*exemplar divinae majestatis*," and who, further, has in Himself the "*exemplar omnium rerum creatarum*," he traces the form (*forma, species*) and beauty of all things. To the Holy Spirit, he traces the usefulness (*Nutzen*) of created things, or their power and goodness. Varying somewhat from this classification, we find him declaring, in a passage presented in the *Tischreden:* Every flower points to the Trinity, inasmuch as its form represents God the Father and His power; its odor and taste the Son and His wisdom; its virtues and effects, the Holy Spirit and His goodness. In general, Luther regards it a delightful mental occupation (*jucunda cogitatio*) to seek everywhere, and in entirely diverse spheres, for a triplicity which may contain traces, or hints, of the Trinity. Thus, he

recalls the maxim of the Lombard: "All things are arranged in weight, measure and number—in dimension, there is line, surface and bulk—in philosophy, existence, reality and unity (*ens, verum et unum*)." In the *Tischreden*, he adduces still further illustrations: "In rivers, there is substance, current and power; in astronomy, motion, light and influence; in rhetoric, arrangement, elocution and action, or gesture; in logic, definition, division and argument—even in music, three notes, Re, Mi, Fa," etc. Yet Luther never attempts to define more sharply such ideas and hints, to develop them more fully, nor to harmonize them with one another. He never thinks of employing them in evidence. We have here cited them only because they reveal to us how thoroughly his entire apprehension of religious truth was interpenetrated with thoughts of the Trinity, and how strongly inclined he was to trace all things else back to this conception, which was for him, beyond all else, the foundation of the true doctrine of salvation.[1]

[1] Op. Ex., i, 62 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 35; x, 167. Jena, i, 574. Op. Ex., v, 304 sq.; iv, 190. Tischr., i, 299 sq. (cf. also 84.)

CHAPTER III.

CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

OUT OF NOTHING—TIME BEGINS—CREATION FINISHED—PROVIDENCE —MAN—ANGELS—MIRACLES—PORTENTS—DEVIL AND EVIL ANGELS.

LUTHER'S conception of God always directly involved the idea that God is in Himself eternal, perfect and self-sufficient, and has no need of a world for His own sake. He did not, therefore, find it necessary to maintain and develop this thought only when brought to face the representations of pantheistic philosophy. No less firm was his conviction that the world, in its dependence upon God, has an actual existence of its own. Never, even when most fully under the influence of German Mysticism, would he consent to regard the finite as a mere semblance, or appearance.[1] The relation in which the world, in the view of Luther, thus stands to God is revealed to us in his doctrine of its preservation and government by this God. The main stress is always laid upon the fact that God Himself is the efficient agent in all things (*der Allwirkende*). The world has been called into existence simply through His will and power, and is, with all its separate elements, continually sustained by that almighty agency, in which He is Himself present in everything. But for the world, when once created, Luther nevertheless maintains also specifically and emphatically the mediate exertion of God's agency in accordance with His own design through the creatures created and preserved by Him —a general mediation, which is afterwards made to include the mediation of salvation through the Word, sacraments and Church.

The leading principles in regard to the work of creation are, in Luther, as in all theologians of the Church, that the world was CREATED OUT OF NOTHING, and that with its creation TIME BEGAN. He, in one passage, declares that the article upon the creation

[1] Vol. I., p. 144.

out of nothing is even harder to believe than that of the incarnation; but here, too, reason must keep silence. With respect to the relation of the world to time, he says that reason can rise no higher than to the thought that the world is eternal, and that, before and after us, men follow one another in endless progression (hence: "*progressus in infinitum*"). But, he adds, from the same premises we should be compelled to argue also the mortality of the soul, since reason recognizes nothing else as unending (only the endlessness of the entire series, within which all individual existence follows in the supposed endless progression). Nevertheless, he, upon occasion, speaks without hesitancy of a "time" when there was as yet no time. But he pronounces as presumption the inquiries as to what there was before time, or beyond its scope, or what God did before time began. We should therefore consider that "God was before the foundation of the world incomprehensible in His essential repose; but now, since the creation, He is within, beyond and above all creatures, that is, He is likewise incomprehensible." That which lies beyond the bounds of time is, in any event, incomprehensible to our minds.[1] As to the *six days* of creation, he holds simply to the words of Moses—particularly against those who would interpret the days allegorically. If any one cannot understand why God occupied just these periods of time, he need do no more than simply confess his ignorance. He himself finds the course of God in taking time for the creative work illustrated in His present mode of bringing children into existence.[2]

Luther further declares, in harmony with the Mosaic narrative, that God at that time "FINISHED" the heavens and the earth (Gen. ii. 1). That is to say, God now rested, in the sense, that He created no other heavens and no other earth. At the creation, moreover, He already uttered for all time the command: "Let the earth bring forth grass, beasts," etc., and: "Multiply, fill land and sea." It is through the power of these words that the multiplication of all creatures has proceeded, and shall continue as long as the world shall stand. It was only, according to Luther, on account of sin, which entered the world after its creation by God, that God has since the beginning created anything *new;* as, for example, thorns and thistles upon the fields, the diseases

[1] Jena, i, 574 b. Op. Ex., i, 8, 15 sq. [2] Op. Ex., i, 9. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 30.

of men, the power of wild beasts, the form of the once upright but now crawling serpent. These would not have been created if man had remained in the state of innocence. With the exception of these consequences of sin, therefore, "all things were at the original creation so constituted in their general character and relations as they were always to remain." God finished His work, *i. e.*, He ceased from establishing ordinances.[1]

Yet Luther was always accustomed to insist, with the greatest possible emphasis, that God does not therefore turn aside from His work like a laborer when the day's task is done; nor do all things now come to pass of themselves; but all things are still PRESERVED, QUICKENED AND GOVERNED only by His perpetually-working power, in which He Himself remains ever present with them. All our power, says he, is made powerful by God, who is an incomprehensible power. God is near our powers with His own power, near our life with His incomprehensible life, near the light of our reason with His incomprehensible light. (Cf. Acts xvii. 28; Jer. xxiii. 23.)[2] With God, he even maintains, this His preservative power and His creative agency are essentially one, declaring directly: "We Christians know that, with God, to create and to preserve are the same thing." [3]

Hence, as called into existence by God, ALL CREATED THINGS ARE GOOD. None of them dare man in his pride abuse nor reproach. All are with man, according to Ps. cxlviii. 7, to praise the Lord. God regards, preserves and adorns even the most insignificant things, such as the grass and flowers, which are created only to last for a day or two and then wither away. He "upholds" them, moreover. That is to say, He does not push and drive and shout; but He upholds them tenderly, permits them to enjoy His tender mercy, governs them all sweetly and gently. Luther often, especially, in the *Tischreden*, reveals his own fervent delight in the contemplation, in even the most unattractive creatures, of the goodness and wisdom and glory of his God. Thus he admires the "most beautiful form" which even mice and flies have, each after its kind. We look upon the wonderful works of God, says he, and yet we cannot understand what we see.[4]

[1] Op. Ex., i, 93–98.

[2] Supra, p. 281 sq. Erl. Ed., xlv, 321 sqq.; x, 188. [3] Op. Ex., v, 230.

[4] Erl. Ed., xxiii, 243 sq.; xliii, 248 sqq.; vii, 192. Op. Ex., i, 65 sq.

Yet Luther notes, at the same time, a difference among things created, and in the relation of God to them. The most exalted of them all, and more excellent than heaven and earth with all that is therein, is MAN, who was created for "participation" in the Deity and in eternal life. For his sake have all other things been created. He is the special object of the divine care. Men are to call God their Father, and to be called His children. In this, *they* are especially authorized to rejoice, who are really through Christ in faith united with God, *i. e.*, true Christians. The central position in Luther's entire apprehension of created things (the work of creation, providence and government of the world) is thus assigned to the human race—viewed as created for fellowship with God, together with the redemptive work through which they, though fallen, may attain such fellowship—and the congregation of Christ, in which God already has His own peculiar people. Of believers and the congregation, or Church, Luther then says: They are the lords of all things, whom all things must serve. They are in the sight of God more than heaven and earth. For their sakes God still preserves and blesses the rest of the world despite its depravity in sin. Yea, "the Church is the only conservator (conservatrix) of all things." [1]

But in designating man the best and most exalted of created things, Luther leaves temporarily out of view another, and super-earthly class of beings, which he finally, when including them within the scope of his thought, designates as the "most exalted creatures," namely, the ANGELS. We must assign them their place in Luther's theology under the doctrine of the divine government of the world. To their care God commends the creatures which He has created and preserves, "in order that they may gather them in from without, lead, preserve, protect and help them, and especially men." In view of this their office —as messengers sent from God—they are called angels. As to their nature and origin, it is held that it was only in connection with the creation of the world, and hence not until after the "beginning" (Gen. i. 1 and John i. 1), that they were created.[2]

[1] Op. Ex., i, 144. Erl. Ed., xxiii, l. c.; xliii, l. c. Vol. I., p. 415 sqq. Erl. Ed., xiv, 290; xii, 287. Op. Ex., viii, 285; x, 362.

[2] Cf., also Op. Ex., i, 29 sq.: There is no doubt that the angels are created beings; but concerning their creation, and concerning their insurrection (pugna) and fall, nothing whatever is found in the Scriptures, except what Christ says in Jn. viii. 44, etc.

Although revealing themselves to us in human form, they are simply spirits. In moral character, they, like man, were at first not so confirmed that they could not have sinned; and the devil, for example, did not abide in the truth. But those of them which did not share in his fall, then became so firmly established in character that they can no longer sin. They are now perfect patterns of proper bearing toward the Creator. Full of light and fire, as we witness especially in connection with the birth of Christ, they give all glory to God alone and none to themselves, just as becomes humble, pure, obedient hearts. In their bearing towards us, they illustrate plainly the condescending love of God, whom they serve. An angel is a noble, kind heart, with a gentle will, so humble as to minister to even the most miserable sinners. The angels have, moreover, by nature and by virtue of their fellowship with God, the most exalted knowledge to be found among created beings. They have a mirror into which to gaze, namely, the countenance of the Father in heaven, and, in consequence especially of this, are much more intelligent than the devils, who have fallen away from God. They were created, further, with a power of their own, by virtue of which they perform wondrously great works in the service of God—very different in this from the human instruments employed by God, such as the prophets, with whom the power of performing miracles was not a native, inborn endowment. This angelic power is based, at the same time, upon their perpetual fellowship with God; and is, likewise, much greater than that of the devils, because the angels stand in the presence of Him whose name is the Almighty.

With such powers, and such obedience to God and love toward us, they are then actively engaged all about us. Particularly do they awaken thoughts within us, inspiring us suddenly with purposes and inclinations. Externally, also, they suddenly confront us with reasons, difficulties and warnings. Thus, even the heathen acknowledge that many things, as, for example, warfare and victory, depend not upon human power or cunning, but upon luck. We recognize that God here employs the active services of angels. In all this activity, they work in opposition to the devil, who is everywhere seeking to bring injury and misfortune upon us. No one could even find the door of his own home, if the angels did not guide him and save him from the delusive suggestions of the devil. Diseases are pre-eminently strokes

and missiles of the devil. Medicines and other means would be of no avail in combating disease, if the angels were not present. Through their ministry and suggestion new remedies are revealed to men for new diseases.

To every Christian, and, indeed, to every human being, and even to every government, city, country, there is assigned a special angel, who is to do the best for his charge. Thus, according to Daniel, St. Michael was the peculiar angel of the Jews. Each Christian has, moreover, not only one, but many guardian angels, just as every one has also his particular devils creeping after him.

Of differences among the angels Luther is led to speak when treating of archangels. He describes Gabriel, who is called "the power of God," as the most exalted power among the angels, the chief commander of the heavenly host, the marshal of the King. In general, he holds, there is among the angels a gradation in dignity, power and wisdom. Princes and lords have greater angels than ordinary men. But he never represents it as a matter for our concern to seek to discover more about such inner relations in the angel-world. The claims of the Pseudo-Dionysius to a further knowledge of the hierarchy of heaven appear to him sacrilegious. In the *Cherubim* and *Seraphim* he does not recognize angels at all. The term "cherub," he holds, designates the blooming appearance of youth in which the angels appear to men, and "seraph," their fiery and fire-beaming form. In German, they might be spoken of as "*Gesichter, die blühen und glühen*" (blooming and glowing apparitions). To this blooming form belong also the appearing with wings and the form of a bird, lion, etc. Thus the angels represent for Luther, in a rich, vivid and strongly imaginative light, the presence of the lovingly and mightily helping and protecting God, particularly in relation to special, sudden emergencies and crises of the inner or outer life of man, in which a carnal eye can detect only a peculiarly fortunate or unfortunate intrusion of chance or of some other mysterious force. He makes no attempt to reach dogmatic precision, nor any more exact delineation of the dividing line between the earthly and the super-earthly powers, nor of that between the agency of the angels and the agency of God Himself and His Spirit. The controlling interest in all his deliverances upon the subject is the directly practical. He does not even take the trouble to adduce passages of Scripture in support of particular

points in the assertions thus made. They appear to him to be natural inferences from leading passages, such as Heb. i. 14 and Matt. xviii. 10.[1]

This doctrine concerning the angels has already involved, in reality, a partial discussion of the *divine agency exerted upon the world*, in so far as it is to be *exercised mediately through created things*. We must now examine more particularly what is, in general, according to Luther's view, the relation of the omnipotence, wisdom and love which sustain and govern all created being to this subordinate, mediate agency, exerted through created beings themselves.

It is here maintained that it is only God Himself who, through His internal working, preserves all things in their nature, continued existence and energies. Even the angels do not help, as does God, "from within." Even where they give good thoughts, "they still do their part only from without." Thus the great heavenly bodies are governed in their courses, not by the angels, but by God through His Word. Such a work would be much too great for the angels. It is through His Word, likewise, that the fish move in the sea, the birds in the air, the rivers through the land, etc. We men are also governed by God. The agency of the angels in this sphere (hence, the "guiding, leading," etc., above mentioned) is merely protective.[2]

But God would also have created things in general, each one of which is itself upheld by His Word, co-operate with Him for the sustenance and preservation of other things, and thus, in particular, for the sustenance of His own believing children. Upon this Luther insists as against the notion that we are authorized, in our confidence in His power and promises, to neglect natural means and personal effort for our own support. Thus, says he, God conceals His own working under the bread through which He nourishes us. In this way all created things are masks of God, whom He permits to work with Him, and whom He helps in doing all manner of things, which He can do also, and

[1] Compare especially, upon the doctrine concerning angels, Erl. Ed., xvii, 177–224 (186, 185, 184, 214, 218); xlii, 145 sqq.; xlvii, 5. Op, Ex., i, 15; ii, 171; i, 140. Erl. Ed., x, 151; vii, 302. Op. Ex., vi, 49; iv. 283 sqq. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 254; vi, 399; xlii, 150; vi, 405; xix, 154, 272; vi, 406. Op. Ex., i, 298 sqq. Erl. Ed., lxiv, 144.

[2] Op. Ex., i, 38 sq. Erl. Ed., xlii, 145.

often does, without their co-operation. God, as Augustine says, "so administers created things as to permit them to act with motions of their own; He employs certain means, and so regulates His miraculous deeds as to employ, nevertheless, the ministry of nature and natural means; He does not wish to act very largely according to His extraordinary, or, as the Sophists say, His absolute power." It is His desire, in thus concealing His own working, to exercise faith, which, unable to see His agency, is to depend upon the Word (*i. e.*, the promises). He who wilfully demands extraordinary exhibitions of the divine power tempts God. In this light Luther views also the sacraments. In respect to them, as well, we dare not say that the external is superfluous, and of no benefit, although, indeed, the power and blessing come from God.

In this way, God, while Himself alone conducting the government of men, still employs His creatures in the work as instruments and masks. He has associated with Himself both His angels and us, His human creatures, and desires to reign through us. We have seen the place assigned in the divine economy to the angels. The government which He conducts through men is two-fold, namely, the *secular*, embracing the government of the home and the authority of parents over their children, and the spiritual, which is exercised through the ministry of the Word. Thus, God has three spheres of external government—the two human ones just mentioned and that of the angels; and besides these He has His own divine sphere of government.[1]

This entire mediate agency of God exercised upon separate creatures, together with that mediated through angels, belongs, according to Luther, to the "*ordinate power of God.*" To this would have been attributable, for example, the miracle, if God had brought forth from the thicket, through the angel's word of command, the ram which Abraham was to offer in sacrifice instead of Isaac—"*tanquam per potentiam ordinatam et mediatam.*" Yet Luther constantly maintained that God can exert His power also immediately when and where He will, and that He has often done so; for example, when turning the heat of the fiery furnace into coolness. He knows nothing of any laws of

[1] Erl. Ed., xi, 109 sq.; cf. supra, p. 218. Op. Ex., xi, 27 sq.; ii, 210 sq.; iv, 288. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 253; xlii, 145 sqq.

nature so fixed in and of themselves as to exclude the possibility of their direct contravention at any time by God. He observes, further, that the laws which philosophy (Physics, Natural Science) lays down for the elements and general forces of nature, in accordance with the order actually established by God, do not bind the Creator even in the ordinary course of nature. God could, contrary to the latter, have fire in the sea; and, according to the scriptural narrative of the creation, there are waters also above the heavens, or firmament, in disregard of the ordinary rule according to which heavy objects fall. Such phenomena he compares to the exceptions to the rules of grammar, and to the readiness (ἐπιείκεια) with which the laws of states are modified. That which the Word has created and upholds can, he further declares, be also now changed by Him, just as all nature as now existing shall one day be transformed.[1]

From such a conception of nature in general, and, still more, from the view above noted of the ordinate agency of God through angels, it is evident that we cannot look, in the writings of Luther, for any strict definition of MIRACLES. Under this term he embraces the daily exhibitions of the divine omnipotence in the course of nature, which transcend our power of comprehension. It is just as great, and even a greater wonder, he holds, that God should cause corn to grow out of sand and stones than that He should have fed thousands with seven small loaves. We pay no attention to these miracles, only because they are so common, and hence God must occasionally perform, not a greater, but an unusual one, that does not follow the ordinary course of nature, in order to arouse us. He regards as truly lofty miracles, in comparison with which the miraculous healings, etc., were scarcely more than childish miracles, the constant exhibitions of Christ's power in the defence and preservation of Christianity against the devil, mobs, tyrants, etc., particularly in his own day, in the midst of the Reformation. But by far the greatest miracle of all he regards it, that Christ through His Word gives life to the souls of men, washes away their sins with His blood, etc. Christ Himself, he holds, considers that which is done to the soul much greater than that which is done to the body.[2]

[1] Op. Ex., iv, 289 sq.; v, 230 sq. Erl. Ed., xi, 109. Op. Ex., i, 36, 39.

[2] Erl. Ed., xii, 219; lxiii, 343; xvi, 190. Op. Ex., xxiii, 413.

The power to perform such special external miracles as those of the prophets, of Christ during His earthly ministry, and of the apostles, still actually resides in believers by virtue of their faith. Wherever a Christian is found, there is also the power of working such miracles, if necessity require them. Thus devils have often actually been, and still are, driven out in Christ's name; likewise, through appeal to the same name and prayer, the sick recover and many receive help in great bodily and spiritual distresses. Let no one, however, presume to exercise the power where necessity does not demand it. Even the apostles did not employ it recklessly, but only in order thereby to give confirmation to the Word of God. For this purpose we no longer require such evidence, since the Word shines brightly before the whole world, since even the Pope and the sects have accepted it, and since no other word or revelation is to be expected. If, however, declares Luther in one passage, necessity should require it, in consequence of assaults upon the Gospel, "we would be compelled to actually get to work and also perform miracles before we should suffer the Gospel to be reproached and suppressed; but I hope this may not be necessary." [1]

In speaking of Luther's general view of the world and its relation to God, we must not neglect to notice also the significance which he attaches to UNUSUAL PHENOMENA in the heavens, such as comets, eclipses of the sun and moon, etc., as also monstrosities in human form or in the bodies of irrational animals, abortions, etc., in so far as he regarded these as divinely-given signs of warning. He speaks very frequently, especially in his letters, of current instances of this kind. This conception is one which he shared with the great mass of his contemporaries. In his case, it affords us still further evidence of a deep religious tendency to bring the whole creation into the most intimate relation to God and His dealings with men. He then classifies such wonders done by God with the signs and obstacles which are placed in our way on the earth by the angels. Yet he does not wish us always to trace back what he represents as thus done by God to an extraordinary interference of the Almighty. He sees such divine signs, also, in phenomena predicted by astronomers

[1] Weimar Predigten, 90. Briefe, ii, 275. - Erl. Ed., xii, 182 sq., 218; xvi, 191; l, 86 sqq.

from their study of the regular courses of the stars. He grants even the possibility of astrological predictions, but finds them very unreliable. If we succeed in rightly interpreting the signs in one instance, we fail repeatedly in other cases. God Himself seeks to show us the uncertainty of this art. We cannot make a science out of it. Nor is there any need, according to the divine purpose, that we should do so—just as little as that we should understand the natural force manifested in the signs, lightnings and fires in the heavens above us. It is enough that we recognize in these things general indications of the divine wrath, and amend our lives. Christians, who have given themselves to God, have no need of the threatenings and warnings of the astrologers.[1]

In this way the whole creation is conceived as constantly held in the hand of the almighty and merciful God; and the central point and culmination of all the actions of this God is found in that which He desires to do for His human creatures, and especially for believing Christians.

But THE DEVIL AND THE EVIL ANGELS, who oppose God in this world, are not overlooked. The entire sphere of human life and the world in general appears to Luther involved in a conflict being waged between the devils, on the one hand, and God and His angels on the other—a conflict, moreover, in which God Himself already has the devil in His power, and permits the latter to ply his arts only in so far as may accord with and serve the divine purposes.

The character of the devil is the *direct opposite to that of God and the good angels*. As the nature of God is nothing but love, so the devil is in his nature nothing but an eternal flame of hatred and envy against God and all His works, particularly against the pious. At the same time, the evil spirits, like the angels from whose ranks they fell, have higher endowments of a spiritual nature than men, great understanding and power, just as an evil man has frequently better judgment and understanding in secular affairs than a pious man.[2]

That the evil spirits are *fallen beings*, and that even the devil was once an angel of light, is certain, from the declarations of Scripture. It is uncertain on which of the days of the creation

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 255 sqq.; x, 64, 322 sqq. Op. Ex., i, 56.

[2] Erl. Ed., xix, 366 sq.; xvii, 194 sq.

their fall occurred—probably on the second or third. Beyond this, the Scriptures give us no further information. We may, however, with all probability, suppose the cause of their fall, or their chief sin, to have been pride. They despised the Son of God, and their chief, the devil, particularly, was not satisfied to be the most beautiful image of God among the angels, but desired to be the inward, natural, exact image of God, equal to the Son. The ancient Fathers here apply the words of Isa. xiv. 13, although these were originally spoken, not of the devil, but of the king of Babylon. The evil spirits took offence especially at the self-humiliation of the Son, and likewise at the exaltation of humanity, even above the angels, through the incarnation of the Son, Lucifer having, as St. Bernhard says, foreseen this purpose of God. They stumbled, also, at the service which they were to be expected to render to men. The wicked attempt to learn more about the unknown, unrevealed God than he was entitled to know was also probably a part of the sin of Lucifer.[1] These spirits now constitute a realm by themselves—differing in their powers as do the good angels—with various offices and activities. Lucifer, or simply "the devil," rules over the others, and through them as his servants and subjects.[2]

It is from these evil spirits that all our *misfortunes* come; just as God, the God of love and life, can of Himself do nothing but good. As Christians should recognize the angels as occupying the place assigned to the deities of good fortune among the heathen, so, likewise, they should know that everything evil and disastrous that occurs comes from the devil. The loss of an eye, sickness, death at the hands of a murderer, etc., are strokes, or missiles, of the devil. He raises storms, hurls thunderbolts, incites enemies against us. Wherever a fire breaks out, the devil sits by and fans it with his breath. If it were not that God and the watchful care of His angels restrain and limit the rage of the devil, we could not live a single moment.[3] But it is the special work of the devil to inspire evil thoughts, and thus make the hearts of men full of vice, unbelief, etc. It is only a low class of devils which assail us with the lusts of fornication, avarice and

[1] Op. Ex., i, 29 sq., 189. Erl. Ed., v. 17. Op. Ex., i, 30 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxvii, 87. Op. Ex., i, 141. Erl. Ed., xlvi, 3. Op. Ex., vii, 152; vi, 50.

[2] Erl. Ed., vi, 406; xix, 272 sqq.

[3] Ibid., vi, 402; xvii, 196 sqq.; xlix, 94; vi, 398 sqq. Op. Ex., iv. 284.

ambition. It is a higher class which tempts us to unbelief, despair or heresy. The bitterest suffering which the devil inflicts upon us is that experienced when he assails the soul with the fiery darts of remorse, the divine wrath, and fears of hellish torment. Every prince, as indeed every private man, has his own devil as well as his own angel. It is the devil who inspires heretics, the lawless rabble and tyrants who persecute the Gospel. At the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, every bishop seemed to have brought with him as many devils as a dog has fleas on St. John's day. The so-called free will of the natural man is entirely under the control of the devil, 2 Tim. ii. 26 (cf. citation from *De servo arbitrio*, *supra*, p. 482: Man is a steed, upon which sits either Satan or God). He is able, however, to assail even Christians, particularly with refined spiritual temptations, although Christ has already conquered him. This he does in his character as "Diabolus," reviler, or accuser, Rev. xii. 10; and against the charges which he thus prefers God has given to believers His Holy Spirit as their advocate and patron. To the devil especially, Luther traces his own agonizing spiritual experiences, connected, as they frequently were with bodily suffering, dizziness, etc., to which he often in his letters refers with so much earnestness. He declares that he often feels within himself the devil's fury. He relates that the devil has sometimes at night disputed with him in regard to his own Christian character and his teaching, until the sweat rolled off his body and his heart trembled.[1] Since such power is still allowed to the evil angels and Satan throughout the whole world, and since the latter yet holds dominion over the great mass of the race, he is still called the prince of this world. Thus also, according to Eph. vi. 12, there are many "lords of the world"—who rule over the world and have the whole world, with its emperors and kings, under their dominion.[2]

The devils thus, according to Luther, ply their trade all about us. The Christian should recognize the fact that the devil is nearer to him than his coat or shirt—yea, nearer even than his own skin. Everywhere, too, the angels are found opposing them. We are constantly living and moving between the two.[3]

[1] Erl. Ed., iv, 406; xl, 105; xvii, 187, 209 sqq.; xxiv, 290 sq.; xxxi, 20; xvii, 210; xxv, 74; xxiii, 199; xii, 268; xvii, 211; xxxi, 311 sqq.

[2] Ibid., xix, 273.

[3] Ibid., xvii, 178 sqq.; iii, 350.

These two classes of beings, consequently, in their mutual opposition, occupy corresponding places in Luther's general religious conception of the world. Yet we must not forget the fact already noted, that the agency of the devil does not, in Luther's view, stand opposed to that of the angels alone. It has also the agency of the Holy Spirit to contend against. The devil controls sinful men, as God works in the redeemed and governs them, not only through the angels, but also through the Spirit. The ministry of angels is represented, accordingly, as insufficient for the conquest of the devil, which can be accomplished only by the Son of God. The devil exercises also, in order to deceive and injure us, a peculiar power in the sphere of external nature. He sends storms and lightning. The evil spirits, swarming about us like bees, often show themselves in bodily form, such as flames darting across the sky, leaping like goats in forests and along streams, creeping about in swamps like jack-o'-lanterns. The devil shows himself, as Luther claims to have himself seen, in the form of a sow, a burning wisp of straw, and the like. To the same category belong also the ghosts and hobgoblins sent by the devil. That he has sometimes appeared with horns, broken men's necks, and torn off their heads, appears to Luther not at all incredible.[1] It has been already remarked, that Luther did not pronounce the miraculous works to which the Papacy appealed pure inventions, but recognized them as works of the devil. He declares that the devil thus blinds the eyes of men, that he deceives them with illusions —as, for example, making a person seem to be dead, and then arousing him as though from the dead. He grants, however, that God may, indeed, permit real miracles to be performed by the devil for the punishment of those who will not regard the truth.[2] He considers, finally, as actual facts, the reputed works of witchery and sorcery performed by human beings, especially by women, through the power of the devil—such as causing storms, bewitching cattle, etc. He thinks "*daemones incubos et succubos*" also possible. That devils can actually beget children through intercourse with women, he, indeed, utterly denies; but

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 111; xix, 281 sq.; iii, 349. Supra, Vol. I., p. 420. Erl. Ed., xlvi, 374.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 380, 466. Erl. Ed., l, 340 sqq.; xxxv, 143, 155; xlix, 94 sqq. Comm. ad Gal., i, 277 sqq. Erl. Ed., xliii, 340 sqq.

there are, he grants, children that are deformed by the devil, or are real devils with only simulated or stolen flesh. In the *Decem praecepta* he gives us an account at length of all kinds of sorcery.[1]

We here recognize in Luther very plainly the power of the conceptions of the devil then prevalent among the masses, and derived in part by tradition from the heathen world, under the influence of which he had spent the years of his youth, and which found a response in his natural disposition in the tendency toward a, not only remarkably vivid, but also as far as possible concretely individualized and positive, massive conception of all higher powers of evil as well as of good. We have already, when treating of the nature of God, endeavored to show how the significance thus given to the devil and his agency is linked, in the fundamental features, with Luther's apprehension of the divine nature as derived from the Gospel revelation.[2]

It was then, however, also observed that, with all his opposition to God, the devil is still represented as himself *held in subjection* by the hand of God. To this fact we are brought back by the whole discussion of the Reformer's views of demonology. Since the fall of the devils, their sentence has remained unalterably fixed, although they have not been cast into hell. They have already been bound with chains as a preparatory movement, and it is just because they know that they must lose their castle and make way for us, that they so rage against us. In their rage, moreover, they are not only held in check by their triumphant opponents, God and His angels, the latter far exceeding them in understanding, power and even number; but they are compelled by their very rage, against their will, themselves to serve God and further His purposes. He uses them in accomplishing His "strange work." What they do, He does, since He, by withdrawing His hand purposely, allows them to do it. It is even said that He "incites the devil," in order to punish men. If God, with all the devils that He has at His command, can yet

[1] Erl. Ed., xlv, 184. Comm. ad Gal., iii, 45 (The remark of Luther in this passage is of interest. He says that in the days of his childhood there were many witches, who bewitched cattle and men, and especially children; but that now, since the Gospel has been brought to light, nothing more is heard of these, but the devil blinds the eyes of men by much more terrible spiritual sorceries). Op. Ex., ii, 127; xii, 8 sqq.

[2] Supra, p. 292.

scarcely lead us to call upon Him, what, he asks, would we do if there were no devil at all and no misfortune, etc? By the departure of Christ to the Father, the world and the devil were finally overcome. Whereas redeemed believers are secure in the hand of Christ, the judgment which the world and the devil would fain pronounce upon them is perpetually annulled by the Lord and put to shame. There yet remains only the final execution of the divine judgment upon the latter, which will be visited upon them in the fires of hell.[1]

This doctrine concerning the devil stands also in the most intimate connection with that of *human depravity*. It is just in his inward dominion over sinful men, that the opposition of the devil to the divine will reaches its culmination. The natural man, in so far as the grace of God has not been revealed, appears as actually given over entirely to his power. Luther's remark, that we can and should cast satanic thoughts out of our heads, does not apply to man in his natural state, but only tc the redeemed. But, in the first place, we observe that the fall of Adam and the original sin which thus found entrance, and which involves this dominion of the devil, is never by Luther ascribed to a resistless influence of the devil, but is always represented as the fault of Adam, who was only tempted by the devil. Christians are then represented as snatched from under the dominion of the prince of this world, however he may yet assail them. While they hold fast to Christ, the sacraments, and, above all, the Word of God, they are enabled to realize that the prince of this world has already lost his palace and his armor. A pious man once frightened him away by simply saying: "I am a Christian," affording an illustration of the truth: "A single word can fell him." Believers in Christ need no longer fear him. They may ridicule and despise him. There is nothing else so hard for him to endure; and he flees when such weapons are used against him. If he, indeed, still drops evil and tempting thoughts into the hearts of good people, the latter should not long worry themselves with these, but just let them drop out again. We cannot prevent the birds from flying over our heads, but we need not let them build their nests in our hair. Those who are assailed by

[1] Erl. Ed., xix, 282. Supra, pp. 290 sqq.; 325 sq. Op. Ex., xviii, 167, 288. Erl. Ed., xvii, 197 sq.; xxiv, 291; xvii, 181; xii, 129.

him may even by drinking, playing, jesting, commit some sin (*i. e.*, something that the devil makes sin out of) to show their hatred and contempt for him, by giving him no chance to worry them with scruples about trifling matters.[1]

So little did Luther allow himself to be hampered in his apprehension of the omnipotent mercy of God, or alarmed to the detriment of his own joyous Christian courage, by the thought of the tearful ravages of the devil on every hand.

[1]Erl. Ed., iii, 426; xvii, 237; xlix, 358; vi, 385. Op. Ex., xviii, 305 sq. Briefe, iv, 188.

CHAPTER IV.

NATURAL STATE OF MAN BEFORE AND SINCE THE FALL.

RIGHT WILL AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE — PERFECTIONS — DOMINION — DIVINE IMAGE—ORIGINAL RIGHTEOUSNESS—DIVINE WORSHIP—FIRST SIN—NATURE OF SIN—ORIGINAL SIN—STATE OF SIN.

THE doctrine of the *present* state of man leads at once to the very centre of the fundamental questions around which the dogmatic conflict of the Reformation raged. The positions taken as to his *original* state were not thus involved in the controversies of the day. The declarations of Luther upon the latter subject are, accordingly, not found in his controversial writings, but principally in his *Latin Commentary upon the First Chapter of Genesis*. They are all, however, in entire harmony with the general conception of the nature of sin and of morality which lies at the basis of his doctrine concerning the present state of sin. The doctrine of the original state was with him simply the counterpart of that of original sin, as developed in his controversy with the Papists.

We must endeavor, first of all, to note all the distinguishing features which, according to Luther, marked the condition in which man found himself in the beginning of his career, as he came from the Creator's hand, created, as the Scriptures teach us, after the image of God. We have here, indeed, to do, as Luther confesses, with a condition of which we are no longer able properly to conceive, since we are not only entirely without any experience of it, but have a constant experience of the direct opposite.[1] Yet it is just from this deep consciousness of that which now defiles us, and which cannot have been originally the work of the holy and kind Creator, but is evidently only an opposing and destroying force, that we find Luther developing

[1] Op. Ex., i, 77, 79.

his view of what the Creator's work must itself have been in the beginning.

Man has now, in sinning, alienated himself, with his will, from God. The opposite of this condition Luther finds, in the original state, in the "RIGHT WILL" (*recta voluntas*)—a will morally entirely pure—entirely devoted to the love of God and fellow-man. In immediate connection with this, however, he places a TRUE AND UNERRING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. Thus knowing God, he acknowledges Him as God, believes in His goodness, obeys Him, etc. Man then enjoyed also uninterrupted and undisturbed peace in God, without any care, restlessness or anxiety. This constitutes, according to Luther, the essential contrast to the fundamental features of that state of sin which, after the fall of Adam, became hereditary among men. He regards it as merely a subordinate feature of the original character of man, and one that is to be assumed as a matter of course, that there was in it no trace of low, carnal lust—of that "concupiscence" in which Roman Catholic theologians saw the most important result of the Fall for the inner life of man. Without the Fall, Adam and Eve would have begotten and conceived children in pure sexual love, without wild and loathsome passion, in the spirit of obedience toward God and repose in His fellowship.[1]

It is in the characteristics above noted that Luther finds in man the "*image of God*," and not in his general spiritual endowment—the powers of thought, will, etc.,—which have remained since the Fall, and in which Satan far excels us. In all other respects, also, the native powers of Adam, even in his relation to other objects in the world, were in an EXCELLENT AND FAULTLESS CONDITION, whereas they are now utterly ruined and most thoroughly enfeebled. In him were "all the senses, both internal and external, most superb, the intellect most pure and memory the best"—eyes keener and clearer than the eagle's—perfect knowledge of nature, of animals, plants, etc., as proved by his ability to give to all animals their appropriate names. The human body was also pure in all its parts, with functions of eating, drinking, digestion, etc., without any of the loathsome features now connected with the process of nutrition. The tree of life would have preserved to him perpetual health and youth,

[1] Op. Ex., xix, 17; i, 77 sqq., 142, 130, 178.

and furnished protection against all natural ills. Men would always have retained their sexual virile power; women would have rejoiced in most abundant fruitfulness; children would not so long have needed the mother's breast, but would probably, like little chickens, have stood at once upon their feet and run about to find their own food.[1]

The relation of man to external nature, and especially his DOMINION over it, was regarded as also constituting a feature of the divine image. Nor would the world of nature merely have been willingly subject to man: it was also, in itself, full only of that which was good. All trees were good and fruitful; there were as yet no ravenous beasts; the ground was without thorns; the air was purer and more healthful, and the light of the sun more clear and beautiful. The beasts of the field would have had a common table with Adam, and fed upon wheat and other fruits. Yet Luther, in the course of such descriptions, incidentally asserts that Adam could by a mere wink have frightened off bears and lions—as though such animals might perhaps have existed, but would not have been dangerous to man. He supposes that there would have been a perpetual spring, without winter or frosts; yet he refuses to find an illustration of the "groaning of the creation" (Rom. viii.) in the withering of leaves and decay of fruit, inasmuch as this is an appointment of God, in order that new fruits may grow annually.[2] In this happy state, Adam would have been required, indeed, to labor, to cultivate the land, keep the garden, etc., but he would have done so without any weariness or danger, with pleasure and repose. His children and descendants would also have still been required to spread abroad, bringing the land under cultivation. But they would have had no need of great stone houses. As the birds have their nests, so men would have found dwelling-places here and there in the midst of the scenes in which God should have called them to labor. The comfort of women, especially, would have required fixed abodes.[3]

It was an "entirely divine" life which Adam, by virtue of the

[1] Op. Ex., i, 77. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 55. Op. Ex., xix, 71; i, 78, 80, 149, 138, 155 sqq., 128, 276.

[2] Op. Ex., i, 80, 48, 91, 96, 182, 260, 129. Erl. Ed., ix, 106 sq., 104.

[3] Op. Ex., i, 82, 108, 127 sqq., 166.

divine image which he bore, would have been called upon to lead. He was, "briefly stated, immersed in that which was good, and without any evil lust, just as God Himself, so that he was full of God."[1] From the present life he would have been eventually transferred into life entirely spiritual, angelic, without eating or drinking or other bodily activities (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 45 sq.). Into this new phase of existence he would have been transported without pain, in the midst of a sweet sleep, similar to that which God had caused to fall upon him before the creation of Eve.[2]

The above is all embraced in Luther's conception of the DIVINE IMAGE, as borne by Adam. It furnishes us at once his doctrine of *Original Righteousness* (*justitia originalis*), which may be briefly stated as follows: To man's original righteousness belong all the above elements, in so far as they affect his personal attitude toward God—as, that he acknowledged God, obeyed Him, etc.; that he, without being admonished from without, recognized and honored also the works of God in their true character; that, as a further consequence, he lived in peace, without fear of death, etc. The more restricted idea of righteousness, as distinguished from the entire conception of the original state involved in the possession of the divine image, is not at all presented by Luther. The same condition of body and soul would have been inherited by the children of Adam, *i. e.*, "inherited (original) righteousness" instead of the now universal "inherited (original) sin."[3]

Luther discriminates, in a supplementary paragraph, under Gen. v. 1, between "*imago*, צֶלֶם" and "*similitudo*, דְּמוּת," as follows: The former denotes the image in itself, which does not necessarily imply a full delineation of all the features; the latter indicates the completeness of the image. Moses means to say: God is imaged in man, not only in that the latter possesses knowledge and will, but also to such an extent that he knows God and wills what God wills. In other passages, however, Luther combines both these ideas in a general conception, speaking of the "likeness or image" (*Ebenbild oder imago*). In the divine act, and in the original state of Adam, he thinks of both as really and directly one and the same.[4]

[1] Op. Ex., i, 78. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 55. [2] Op. Ex., i, 163, 82, 288.
[3] Op. Ex., i, 141 sqq. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 55; xv. 47.
[4] Op. Ex., ii, 88.

In opposition to the dominant scholastic theology, Luther maintained, as a fundamental doctrine, that the entire image of God was in such a way impressed upon man in his creation that it belonged to his essential nature. He speaks of the theory, that the likeness (*similitudo*), as discriminated from the image (*imago*), consists in gracious gifts by which nature is completed—that the image refers to knowledge and will in themselves considered, and the likeness to the illumination of knowledge through faith, and the adornment of the will with love. But even when he himself, under Gen. v. 1, discriminates thus, he does so by no means in the spirit of the scholastic theologians; that is, he does not mean to imply that it was only the elements of the "image" which belong to the essential nature of Adam, and that Adam received all else as a gift over and above his natural endowment, either immediately at his creation or at some later moment. On the contrary, he says of the "likeness" (*Ebenbild*), including all in the term: I think, in regard to the image of God, that Adam had this *in his nature* (*substantia*)—that he knew, believed, etc., God. He rejects with great emphasis the theory, that original righteousness (*justitia*) was not connate, etc., and to it he opposes the proposition: Righteousness was not some gift which came from without, separate from the nature of man, but it was truly natural, so that it was the nature of Adam to love and believe God, etc. This, he says, was just as natural for Adam as it is for the eye to receive the light.[1]

Luther could not, indeed, have taught otherwise, in view of his whole conception of morality, upon which, in turn, his final judgment in regard to the state of sin depends. He knows no middle ground between a disposition of the will in harmony with God and one directly opposed to God. If God had not implanted the former in man at his creation, He must have then implanted the latter. It might still, however, have remained an open question, whether the possession of the divine image requires us to attribute to man in the original state such an entire, complete mental and corporeal equipment as Luther claims, or whether, even in connection with such perfectly correct disposition, we may not still think of distinctions in the degree and maturity of the moral and religious righteousness possessed.

[1] Op. Ex., i, 75, 78, 208 sq.

Adam did not yet, indeed, according to Luther, possess the perfection he was designed to attain. Not only was it alone by eating of the fruits of Paradise that he was to obtain actual immortality, and only at the end of his earthly life that he was to enter upon his truly immortal career; but Luther calls even his innocence a "childish innocence," just as he had also as yet only a "childish glory" (*gloria puerilis*). It was still possible for him to be deceived by Satan and to fall. He still needed to be elevated, as to the glory of heaven, so also to mature manly innocence, such as the angels now possess, and as believers shall possess in the other life, *i. e.*, to perfect innocence, from which it should be no longer possible to fall. The thought of a progress in moral development, which is thus acknowledged to have been imperfect, though pure, is no further pursued by Luther.[1] He emphasizes only one further point in this connection, namely, that for Adam, as for the regenerate now, righteousness was, at all events, not to be attained by man's own works; but, on the contrary, because Adam in his personality was created good, upright, pure and holy, his works also, even when he but ate, or drank, or caught birds, were right and good. The same idea lies beneath the saying of the Reformer, that Adam did not need to become more perfect, since he was already perfect by nature; and he received the commandment from God only to display and exercise his piety.[2]

Luther regarded also the general ELEMENTS OF DIVINE WORSHIP as essentially involved in the intercourse of man in his original state with God. He assumes that the seventh day was then already set apart to be kept holy, *i. e.*, dedicated to God, for preaching of Him, praising Him, etc. He regards the tree of knowledge, with the commandment attached to it, as an outward sign. It was to be, as it were, a temple, at which Adam and his descendants were to assemble for divine worship. It was perhaps, also, not a single tree, but an entire grove. It is called "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" by Moses because of the unhappy sequel. Luther maintains it as a certainty, that the tree of life did not possess its peculiar properties by nature, but through the power of the divine Word. He thus finds in it already an analogy for the signs and sacraments afterward granted

[1] Op. Ex., i, 139 sq. [2] Erl. Ed., xlvi, 261 sq.; xlix, 335.

to sinful man. In like manner, says he, the brazen serpent was appointed to heal, and baptismal water to make righteous. In this tree of knowledge, the *Church* also was in reality established —thus antedating the family or civil government, as Eve was at that time not yet created.[1]

But what is now conceived to be the relation between the inner life and outward conduct of man and the agency of God exerted directly upon him. We find no parallels to the sweeping declarations of the *Heidelberg Disputation*,[2] nor to the *Reply to Erasmus*.[3] On the other hand, however, we must point to the above-cited utterances touching the universal agency of God, scattered as they are through the whole course of his later writings. Luther still guards carefully, even in his comments upon the narrative of creation, against his opponents' conception of free will. By virtue of our very creation, he maintains, we are throughout our entire lives only clay in the hand of the potter; we have free will only in regard to that which is beneath us, not in our relations with God, nor in that which is above us. Man possesses a mere passive, not an active, ability (*potentia*). But the Fall is no longer, as in the pamphlet against Erasmus, traced to the doing or not doing of God, but simply to the decision of the will of man, who did not conform to the divine will. The question as to the relation of the universal agency of God to this decision Luther does not consider as a proper subject for investigation. The only conclusion upon this point, in its relation to the original state of man, which can be drawn from the writings of Luther, is the following: All good thought or deed could, even then, come to man only through the continual agency of God, who had implanted it in him by creation. Even then, he was not to aim at any self-righteousness—was not to work actively, instead of allowing God to work in him—was to desire to be nothing but merely passive matter (*materia mere passiva*).[4]

This original state endured until the FIRST SIN of the head of the race. The *Original Sin* from which we suffer then took the place of original righteousness.

In discussing THE FALL, Luther simply and faithfully follows the Mosaic narrative. In the permission granted to Satan, in the

[1] Op. Ex., i, 117 sq., 99 sq., 288 sq., 129.
[2] Vol. I., p. 284.
[3] Vol. I., p. 488.
[4] Comm. ad Gal., i, 374.

form of the serpent, to tempt man, he recognizes the design of God to test man and exercise his powers; in the actual fall of the first pair, simply their own fault. The sinning of men was only in so far conditioned upon their own nature, as the latter had not yet attained the maturity of "manly innocence." But Luther designs thus to attribute to men only a possibility of falling, and not an infirmity which would have made the Fall in any event unavoidable. He, in one passage, expresses the opinion that if the temptation had assailed Adam first, he would probably have overcome it; but he does not even here mean to assert that a conquest would have been impossible for Eve with her lower power of resistance. It is characteristic of Luther, that he avoids all deeper inquiry into the questions here naturally suggesting themselves, especially that touching the relation of the Fall to the divine counsel and operation. All the more earnestly does he strive to impress upon his readers precisely what constituted the sin in the conduct of Eve. She allowed herself to be led into doubt of the goodness of God, who had given the commandment, and presumed to pry into and pass judgment upon His will, which was concealed from her, whereas she should have been content to rest in believing resignation upon His Word. She became guilty of unbelief, which is the source of all sins. Forgetting, in her presumption, that she was a creature, she assumed the place of the Creator Himself, as Satan said: "Ye shall be as God." That the guilty pair discovered their nakedness, and it became a shame to them, was an evidence of the loss of their original righteousness and glory.[1]

In thus portraying the first sin, Luther has already expressed his idea as to what is the essential NATURE OF SIN IN GENERAL. Sin is transgression of the divine Law—everything which is not in conformity with the Law of God. The Scriptures, he declares, never employ the word sin in any other sense. The fundamental sin is unbelief, which is a violation of the fundamental commandment, and thus of the entire Decalogue. The impelling force in unbelief is exaltation of self, in which man seeks himself to be God, and would have God to be nothing. The very same sin which there began in Adam repeats itself in our inborn tendency toward self-righteousness. Man wishes to be God, since he

[1] Op. Ex., i, 182, 190, 184 sqq.; iv, 122 sq.; i, 209 sqq.

trusts to his own works and righteousness, and hopes to be saved by them. There is, in fact, no sin without this. Sin is, therefore, to Luther's mind, a fundamental perversion of the relation between Creator and creature, manifested in the human will. But sin is thus not only the external act, but everything in the inner nature of man which incites or impels him to the act, *i. e.*, the inmost heart with all its energies. The root of all sin is unbelief in the depths of the heart. Luther expressly guards against the idea that sin lies in the very nature of the creature, as the latter was made out of nothing by the fiat of the Creator. There is nothing of the kind, he reminds us, in the angels, stars, or the entire firmament, which were created at the same time.[1]

Among the apostles, says Luther, St. Paul only has treated the subject of *Original Sin* expressly and with real seriousness. He himself designates the doctrine the most weighty of all contained in the Scriptures or in theology, and declares that without it a proper understanding of the Scriptures is impossible, as may be clearly seen from the idle dreams of teachers of the modern school.[2]

The NATURE OF ORIGINAL SIN may be directly inferred from what has been said of original righteousness. Luther, in his delineation of the subject, starts with the definition of Anselm, which he found also in the writings of Biel, at one time diligently studied by him, and which he describes as unanimously approved by all the doctors, *i. e.*, that original sin is nothing else than a destitution (*carentia*) of original righteousness. He regards it, however, as a destitution of that which belonged to human nature, and a loss which involves the inward alienation of the entire man from his Creator and Lord. He then further asserts: Original sin is a complete fall of human nature—a darkening of the understanding, since we no longer recognize God and His will, nor cherish any regard for His works—a wondrous corruption of the will, so that we refuse to trust the mercy of God, do not fear Him, but, setting aside His Word and will, obey the impulses of the flesh. We begin to hate and revile Him, and our hatred of Him becomes passionate. We are simply turned away (*aversi*) from God.

[1] Jena, ii, 416 b. Erl. Ed., xliv, 79. Op. Ex., i, 185. Erl. Ed., l, 56, 363. Ibid., lxiii, 122 sq. Jena, i, 575.

[2] Op. Ex., xix, 73, 75.

This condition of the soul is the principal feature of the fallen state. To it is added, as an element of original sin, the subjection of the body to the power of vile and savage lust. Thus there is again brought to view the true reformatory element in the doctrine of Luther. He differs even from Augustine in this emphasizing of the most refined features of original sin, in contrast with the low and base "concupiscence." He continues, also, to contend for that higher view of the biblical conception of *Flesh*, which he very early advanced.[1] He regards the entire man, with his inward and outward endowments, with his soul and reason, as flesh, according to John iii. 6. He explains this designation of man by asserting that in him all things are done to gratify the flesh, or to effect that which will minister to the benefit of the flesh and the temporal life. Under this conception he then, however, includes the whole scope of the tendency which stands in contrast with the aspiration of the soul toward heavenly things, the future life and God—the entire tendency toward self and away from, or against, God. In Rom. viii. 3, we are to understand, he says, chiefly unbelief, and, in general, all sin, under the term flesh. Similarly, he maintains, against Erasmus, that now even that which is most excellent in human nature is nothing else than flesh. He regards as included in the conception of this term especially self-righteousness, the wisdom of the flesh, and the notion of reason, that man may become righteous through the works of the Law.

This sinfulness is *inherited*, or *original*, sin. We are infected with it from the womb. David says: "In sin was I conceived." He does not say: "My mother sinned when she conceived me," nor: "I sinned when I was conceived"—but he speaks of the yet unshapen seed itself, and declares it to be full of sin and a mass of corruption. In meeting the question, by what means the material in the womb is already so corrupted, Luther falls back upon the lust of the parents connected with the act of generation, which always, in his view, retains some taint of sin, even in the case of the regenerate, although in the latter the sin is covered by the grace of God. In another connection, he even applies the above language of Ps. li. to sin in the conceiving

[1] Erl. Ed., xv, 46, 52. Op. Ex., i, 142 sqq. Comm. ad Gal., iii, 8 sq. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 126. Jena, iii, 215 b, 218. Comm. ad Gal., i, 205, 313; iii, 44.

mother. Upon the question as to the origin of the soul itself, he adopted decidedly the theory of Traducianism. In the year 1545, he asserted in formal propositions: The view that the soul is propagated (*ex traduce esse*) appears to be not altogether foreign to the Scriptures. Its adoption makes it easier to account for the propagation of sin. The character and spirit of parents certainly reveal themselves in their children. Who has ever proved the thesis (of the Lombard): "The intelligent soul is imparted by creation and the physical nature by propagation," or who shall prevent us from tracing the origin of every soul after the first to propagation? The thesis raises the difficult question, whether God is not unrighteous if He binds a pure soul to the flesh and defiles it from without. What shall prevent us, on the other hand, from maintaining that God might, in the first instance (at the creation), bring the "*anima intellectiva*" into being from nothing, and afterward from corrupted seed, just as He allows a rusty ear of wheat to grow from a diseased grain. At all events, the believer may, without peril, remain in uncertainty upon this point.[1] Another name applied by Luther to inherited sin, or "*peccatum originalis*," is "*sin of nature*," *i. e.*, the sin which we by nature, just as we are conceived and born by nature, bring with us into the world, distinguished thus from the actual sins (*peccata actualia*) which flow from it.[2]

This sin of nature Luther, however, regards as truly sin. For this estimate of it he contended especially in the discussion of the question, whether it was still sin in those who had been released from guilt in baptism or regeneration—opposing at this point the prevalent theory of original sin, according to which the term sin is here to be understood as meaning only penalty for sin (*i. e.*, the sin of Adam), and only the "tinder" of sin remains, as a mere infirmity, in the baptized.[3] Here, too, he firmly maintains, must be applied the axiom: "Sin is that which is not according to the Law of God." The supposed mere infirmity in question is "against God." God never lays down a Law in regard to any other infirmity—as, for example, a fever—forbidding us to obey it.

[1] Op. Ex., xix, 70. Erl. Ed., xv, 51 sq.; x, 305 sq. Jena, i, 575.

[2] Erl. Ed., x, 306; xix, 15.

[3] Cf. Vol. I., p. 326. Also, very particularly, Confut. rat. Latom.

From this view of original sin, it follows that it, of itself, makes us guilty before God. God establishes Law precisely for those things that involve guilt upon our part. As we are by nature sinners, so are we also by nature already the children of wrath. Hence, Luther demanded from Zwingli, and secured from him at Marburg, the acknowledgment that original sin is such a sin as to condemn all men to perdition. The *Schwabach Articles* declare: "That original sin is really and truly sin, and not only a failing or infirmity, but such a sin as would condemn and eternally separate from God all men who come of Adam, if Christ had not interceded for us." [1]

The scholastic theology attributed the sin of Adam directly to his descendants, who were regarded as having sinned with him, the head of the race; but it did not regard the lust for sin, inherited from him, as in itself true and damnable sin. The question arises for us, whether Luther may not, together with the guilt which adheres to us because of indwelling sin, have accepted also the prevalent idea of an *immediate transfer of Adam's guilt* to us. We can find no trace of such a view in his writings. In the sermon in which he defines original sin as a "destitution," etc., he proceeds to say: With this original sin we have been punished through (on account of) the sin of Adam. But he adds: This original sin we bring with us, and it is attributed to us no less than if we had ourselves committed it. The assertion here, it will be observed, is that there is attributed to us just that which is now actually in us. He asserts, upon the authority of Rom. v. 12, that we are under sin and condemnation through Adam's transgression; but he at once explains, that we would not sin and be condemned through his transgression if it were not our own, and that it becomes our own (not, in the first instance, by any action of our own, but) through our *birth*, in consequence of which the disposition hostile to God is dominant within us. He says again: Through the one man, Adam, and his sin, which seems so trifling in comparison with its consequences, it came to pass that we must all die, although we have not committed the offence, but have simply, because born of him, come under sin and death. In this passage again, it will be noted, he represents

[1] Jena, ii, 416 b, 424, 422. Op. Ex., i, 135 sq.; x, 193. Erl. Ed., xix, 15; lxv, 89; xxiv, 324.

us as dying through Adam, just because we, through our birth from Adam, have also come into sin. He adds also expressly: "Although since the Fall, and when *we are born*, it is no more the sin of another, but becomes our own." On the other hand, we find nowhere in his writings any outline or basis for a theory of the transmission of guilt without such mediation as has been indicated.[1]

Let us now scrutinize more closely THE GENERAL CONDITION TO WHICH MAN HAS THUS BEEN REDUCED BY THE LOSS OF HIS ORIGINAL RIGHTEOUSNESS—the extent of the sphere throughout which the corruption has spread.

There is yet in man *Understanding and Will*, although these are most *profoundly weakened* and even utterly leprous and impure. There is still a great difference between him and the other living beings on the earth. Even the heathen have still been able to infer his exaltation above the latter from the fact that he walks erect, with his eyes directed towards the heavens. And there is yet reserved for him the possibility of restoration to the divine image, and even to a more complete reflection of that image, inasmuch as we are to be born anew through Christ unto eternal life, to the actual enjoyment of which Adam had not yet attained.[2] Yet man is thoroughly corrupted in his very highest relations, *i. e.*, to God and heavenly things. There is still possible to him a certain knowledge of God;[3] but he can no longer rightly know anything at all of God, and least of all, that which he most needs to know. This "feeble knowledge"[4] is thus, in truth, no knowledge at all. The best thoughts of the natural man, even those of the most famous heathen philosophers, concerning God and His will are nothing but Cimmerian darkness. Not a single spark of divine knowledge has remained uncorrupted in man. "Reason, without the Holy Spirit, is simply without the knowledge of God." The Law of God, in particular, is yet written upon the hearts of men. Otherwise, its proclamation would have as little effect upon them as upon horses and asses. But it lies in the heart in very dark and faded characters. The will is entirely and absolutely alienated from God, and in servitude to sin and the devil. If we use the terms good and evil in

[1] Erl. Ed., xv, 46. Jena, iii, 231 b. Erl. Ed., li, 144, 148.

[2] Op. Ex., i, 80, 77, 84, 107. [3] Supra, p. 219. [4] Supra, pp. 219, 263.

the theological sense, and not merely in the sense of civil law—that is, as indicating that which is good in the sight of God, and not merely that which is outwardly good in the sight of men—we must confess that man without the Holy Spirit can do nothing but sin, and goes on from sin to sin.[1] The scholastic maxim: "Natural things are complete as far as they go" (*naturalia adhuc esse integra*), is therefore thoroughly false. The highest element in man, the spiritual (*spiritualia*), is corrupted, yea, entirely extinguished (*prorsus extincta*), so that there remains nothing but a corrupted knowledge (understanding) and a will that chooses only what is contrary to God. "Man, *in divine things*, has nothing but darkness, evil dispositions" (*tenebras, malitias*), etc. Luther is willing to assent to the above maxim only with the understanding that there shall be included under the term "*naturalia integra*" nothing more than the simple fact that man, sunken in wickedness and under the dominion of the devil, still has free will and power to build houses, administer civil offices, and do other things of the kind within the sphere which has been, according to Gen. i. 26 sqq., made subject to him. The corruption which holds absolute sway in that portion of man's nature most directly related to things divine and truly good extends, furthermore, through the soul itself and through the body. We have even lost almost entirely the original dominion over the lower creatures, retaining only the name, or empty title. We must acknowledge: "The natural powers are corrupted to the very last degree" (*naturalia esse extreme corrupta*). Here is no trifling disease or defect, but utter disorder ("*extrema ἀταξία*"), the like of which is found nowhere else in the whole creation, demons excepted.[2]

We can understand from the above how Luther could declare that the divine image (the "*imago*" as well as the "*similitudo*") has been *lost*, and yet, again, that it has been "*almost entirely lost*"; for that which yet remains to man was also a part of the original image of God. The evil within us, which has displaced the divine image, he calls an image of the devil himself, which the latter has impressed upon us. The image of God has been

[1] Comm. ad Gal., iii, 8. Op. Ex., ii, 167, 268. Erl. Ed., xxxvi, 56 sq. Op. Ex., ii, 164 sqq., 265 sq.

[2] Comm. ad Gal., i, 254 sq. Op. Ex., xix, 16 sqq.; i, 85; ii, 265.

destroyed, and we have become like the devil. Man must be an image either of God or of the devil, for he becomes like the being in accordance with whose will he orders his life. But, inasmuch as this perversion does not extend so far as to exclude the possible restoration of the image of God, Luther, in accordance with Gen. ix. 6, allows so much significance to still attach to the original character of man, as created in the divine image, that God can, in view of it, yet acknowledge man as the noblest of creatures and forbid the wilful taking of human life.[1]

During the Flacian controversy the question arose, whether sin has, according to Luther, become (part of) *the Substance, Essence, or Nature of Man.* In the sense in which these terms are understood by the authors of the *Formula of Concord*, we must, with them, answer the question in the negative. We have already investigated the meaning of the term, "natural sin," used by Luther as a synonym for original sin. He means nothing more by the expression, "essential sin" (*peccatum essentiale*), employed, for example, in the *Sermo de triplici justitia* of the year 1518.[2] Original sin is so designated in contrast with actual sin (*peccatum actuale*) only in so far as the former is related to the latter as a native energy implanted in man to the resultant course of his outward life; or in so far as it may be said that the entire natural activity of man produces only sin. That such is the meaning of the term is very clearly manifest from the significance of the contrasted conception of "essential righteousness" (*justitia essentialis*). The expression, "*peccatum substantiale*," occurring in the *Confutatio rationis Latomianae*,[3] has no relation whatever to the present question; since the subject there under discussion is not the relation of sin to the essential nature of man, but what is always and everywhere the essential nature of sin itself, as discriminated from its possibly varying degrees, relations, working, etc. That the passage in the *Commentary upon Galatians*,[4] which declares that the sinner should feel himself a sinner and accursed not only "*adjectively*," but "*substantively*," yea, even as "sin itself and curse," is not to be interpreted as making the sin and man's nature one and the

[1] Op. Ex., i, 77, 81; ii, 88; i, 84, 79. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 55, 152. Op. Ex., ii, 291.

[2] Jena, i, 177; cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 285.

[3] Jena, ii, 418 b.

[4] Comm. ad. Gal., ii, 31.

same thing, is very evident from the application of the same language to Christ, who became sin and a curse (substantively) for us. The meaning is, therefore, only that the individual must feel himself entirely burdened down by sin. We must so feel because sin dwells within us: Christ so felt because, having no sin Himself, He took it upon Himself and His conscience. When Luther declares, in his *Commentary upon Genesis*,[1] that sin is now part of the nature of man (*de essentia hominis*), just as the original righteousness was not merely a superadded endowment, but "*de essentia hominis*," he does not say that it has become that nature itself, and he immediately adds the remark, that man's nature (*natura*) remains, although in many ways corrupted (*corrupta*). In commenting upon Ps. li., Luther remarks:[2] We should know "that we are nothing but sin"; and again: Sin is "that entirety (*hoc totum*) which is born from father and mother, before the man is of an age to be able to do anything or to think, but from which, as a root, nothing good in the sight of God can be produced." But he has here in view the inherited moral and religious tendency of man, as opposed to the scholastic conception of it—and not those elements of man's nature which he elsewhere always expressly represents as still preserved, though weakened. To the idea that sin may, according to Luther, be said to be the nature (*substantia*) of man, we may further, with perfect propriety, oppose the passage of his *Commentary upon Psalm xc.*,[3] in which he approves of the application of the term, "quality" (*qualitas*), or even "disease" (*morbus*), to original sin, in so far as it is thereby acknowledged as embracing the greatest possible evil, subjection to the divine wrath, etc. The thought, that it should be called our nature, is directly antagonized by the fact that Christ truly received His human nature from the defiled physical nature of His human progenitors through Mary. "It is truly human nature, not other than that in us"—only cleansed from the leaven of sin.[4]

The question may, however, still occur to us, whether, allowing that the nature of man in its other elements yet remained after the Fall, it may not have been the idea of Luther that, with the thorough corruption of his moral character, original sin has

[1] Op. Ex., i, 210.
[2] Ibid., xix, 16.
[3] Ibid., xviii, 320 sq.
[4] Ibid., ix, 174.

entirely usurped the place of the *moral nature*. Or, it may be asked how, according to Luther, the nature of fallen man yet differs from that of the devil. Has not that which remains in man of his original higher nature remained likewise in the devil, just as, in the actual evil which has in man usurped the place of the lost higher character, he bears the image of the devil? We reply, that Luther never made any attempt to attribute to man *such* a corruption of the moral nature as he ascribes to the devil; for with all the corruption of man's nature there is still associated a capacity for restoration, of which there can be no thought in the case of Satan. He says of the flesh and blood of fallen man: "It was corrupted, but in such a way that it could be restored." Thus the "mass of sin" (*massa peccati*) was purified when the Son of God received flesh and blood from the body of Mary: and thus, also, shall we be entirely purified on the day of our final redemption, for "sin and death are separable ills" (*i. e.*, separable from us).[1] In the *De servo arbitrio*,[2] he ascribes to men a passive aptitude (*aptitudo passiva*), by virtue of which they are yet capable of being apprehended and saved by the Spirit of God. We must acknowledge, however, that the term, "aptitude," does not throw any light whatever upon the question as to what it is in man that makes such a restoration possible in his case while impossible for Satan. The word is nothing more than another mode of expressing the asserted fact without indicating its limitations—giving us only the "*Dass*," and not the "*Wiefern*" of the possibility. Nor do we find any further light upon the question in the writings of the Reformer. We can, it is true, clearly discover a difference between the fallen nature of man and that of Satan in that which Luther grants to the former in the sphere of civil righteousness and in the virtues often displayed among heathen nations, in which there is certainly not absolute Satanic corruption. But Luther himself does not seek to gain here a point of attachment for the possibility of restoration which he maintains, but at once fixes attention, as is his wont, upon the other side, *i. e.*, the fundamental corruption which must be recognized even in this sphere of man's activity. We recall the "*Synteresis*" of Luther's earliest sermons,[3] and observe how entirely he has abandoned that theory. He does not even now,

[1] Op. Ex., ix, 174. [2] Vol. I., p. 485. [3] Vol. I., p. 148.

it is true, deny to man a desire to escape perdition. But in this he recognizes, not a secret disposition inclining toward true eternal life and the fellowship of God, but only dread of penalty and an outgrowth of self-love. True and real distress in view of hell and of the awful misery of the state of sin is, in his view, a product only of the renewing grace of God, which merely finds its point of attachment in man in the "aptitude" thus abstractly conceived.

If we now inquire more closely as to the *State of the Will* in this total depravity, we shall find the strongest expressions ever made by Luther in regard to it still repeated and maintained. The free will is said to be dead; it is nothing; it is, on the contrary, certainly the devil's will; under its direction men are compelled to live as captives of the devil.[1] But in the method of establishing this position we now observe an important difference. The argument based upon the omnipotence of God and His foreknowledge has fallen entirely into the background, in comparison with that drawn from the character of fallen man as such, *i. e.*, from the evil which dwells within us from birth in consequence of the fall of our first parents. The chief interest of Luther always centres in the antagonism displayed against all claims of man to merit of his own, by which he may contribute to his own salvation, and against all unsettling of our assurance of salvation through Christ alone by representing it as obligatory upon us to contribute something to this end by our own efforts. He was compelled, in maintaining this fundamental position, to deal with the theories of the later Scholasticism, which sought, with equal boldness and artfulness, to combine a gross Pelagianizing view of the natural powers of the will with the assertion that we are saved only by grace. He often finds occasion to criticise the maxim which had been generally adopted by the Papists, that, "if man does his part (*quod in se est*), God then grants him grace"—that man, by works of his own good will, may merit for himself this grace (by which we are to understand a supernatural disposition imparted to the soul) *de congruo*, and may then, possessing this grace, perform a "work worthy and meritorious of eternal life" (*opus condignum et meritorium vitae aeternae*). Into such great error, says he, do even the most pious among the Papists, such

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 73 sq.

as Gerson, fall. But he was called upon to combat errors still more extreme than these; as, for example, that the natural man is able of himself to fulfil the Law of God in the main—*quoad substantiam facti*—and, particularly, to love God above all things, and that he is unable of himself alone to attain eternal life only because to this end the Law must be fulfilled also "according to the intention of the Giver," and this intention of the divine Law-giver demands not only a fulfilling of the Law by love, but also a fulfilling of it in the supernatural disposition of grace and by a supernatural love. Thus, says Luther, do Scotus and Occam teach. It is not necessary for us to follow the course of his counter-arguments. The question was one of fundamental difference in the estimate of moral good in general.[1]

As to that *free will which man still retains*, and that righteousness which he is still able to display in the operations of such free will, Luther's views remain the same as expressed in his earlier writings.[2] The sphere of their activity lies in *civil affairs*, *affairs subject to reason* (*res rationi subjectae*), the things designated in Gen. i. 26, 28—in brief, secular affairs, as contrasted with spiritual things, or with "free will toward God and in (regard to) the salvation of souls." The maxim, "*naturalia integra*," cannot, indeed, be accepted even in regard to civil affairs (*civilia*). Great are everywhere the oversights of the men who establish laws in this sphere. Yet, within a certain compass, there is done in such matters what is in outward conformity to the Law. In this connection, we are led to think especially of the righteousness of the *heathen*. Luther does not always speak so disparagingly of this as in his strictures upon the theses of Zwingli.[3] He too calls Zenophon, Themistocles, Regulus, Cicero, etc., great and excellent men, who, endowed with distinguished and truly heroic virtues, administered the affairs of state most wisely and achieved glorious results for the welfare of their nations. He recognizes in Regulus, Socrates and others, fidelity in fulfilling promises made, and truthfulness, designating the latter especially a most exalted virtue.[4] Nevertheless, all this kind of righteousness, he declares,

[1] Comm. ad. Gal.,l, 183–190, 253 sq. Op. Ex., ii, 270 sq.; xix, 17. Erl. Ed., xxv, 72 sqq., 126 sq.

[2] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 150, 430 sq., 484; also in De servo arbitrio.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxxii, 400; cf. also, supra, p. 189.

[4] Op. Ex., ii, 166; xix, 18. Erl. Ed., xxv, 73. Comm. ad Gal., i, 255; ii, 130; i, 182 sq.

avails nothing before God. He says expressly, indeed, that God rewards also such works and virtues. It was in view of them, for example, that the Romans received from God their vast empire. Thus, in our own day, those nations which refrain from murder, adultery, etc., receive greater blessings from God; while to men of such character are given riches, honor, etc.[1] But such persons are yet by no means, on account of these secular virtues, good in the sight of God. They are not even thereby in any degree made capable of eternal life. They receive in outward secular blessings the reward of their outward righteousness. For, says he, we must look upon the heart. And in the hearts of even the best men in heathen nations he finds the fundamental sin, pride; in this he even discovers the deepest motive prompting them to their boasted good works. It was the desire to be held in honor by future generations which made them willing to die for their fatherland. Even in the men whom he himself applauds for their truthfulness, there was concealed, beneath an appearance of holiness and righteousness, hypocrisy in relation to God and alienation from Him. Theirs was not the truthfulness which lies in the hidden parts, and in which God takes pleasure (Ps. li. 6). They all seek to rob God of the glory and ascribe it to themselves. There is lacking everywhere among them the "right will (*recta voluntas*) toward God." Nowhere do we find the proper final cause inspiring their conduct, *i. e.*, obedience toward God and love for others. We dare not interpret these criticisms as indicating that Luther would trace all the good works of the heathen, or of the unregenerate, simply and directly to their underlying evil motive. On the contrary, he expressly says, in immediate connection with the above strictures, in regard to the virtues of the heathen as well as those of Christians: "It is true that the minds of both (classes) are divinely impelled"; but "the desire for glory has subsequently corrupted these divine impulses among the heathen." The good, in such instances, he regards as coming from God, but from the personal inclination of man alone comes the evil; and it is according to the latter entirely that the character borne in the sight of God by the man, with all his deeds and undertakings, is decided. In comparison with this attitude of the will, the differences observ-

[1] Jena, ii, 425. Op, Ex., ii, 47, 166; cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 285.

able, even in matters of morality and immorality, in the natural man, have no significance when viewed from a theological standpoint. Before God all are simply sinners, idolaters, etc.[1]

It follows, that *all have absolutely forfeited eternal life*, and are absolutely condemned to perdition, unless saved by Christ. Zwingli's utterance as to the salvation of some among the heathen is a thoroughly pernicious and destructive error.[2] In one passage, indeed, Luther discriminates very decidedly between the degrees of guilt and damnableness attaching to simple original sin, before it has issued in any personal transgressions of the Law, and such actual transgressions themselves. In combating the opinion, that unbaptized children dying in infancy must be lost, he declares: "'Although they bear inborn sin, nevertheless it is a great thing that they have never sinned against the Law.[3] But he makes no distinction between a greater or less degree of damnableness as attaching to the varying extent of actual transgressions.

The result of guilt, or the judgment impending by divine appointment over the natural man, is commonly embraced by Luther under the terms, "damnation" (*Verdammtsein*), or "death and hell." He lays great stress, in such connections, upon *bodily death*, in so far as the natural man in it experiences the wrath of God; whereas believers, delivered from wrath, find in death only a gentle sleep, yea, pass blissfully away before realizing the presence of death. Thereafter, in hell, is really experienced the "eternal" death of those accursed of God. But the latter makes its presence felt already in this life. It is the terrors of eternal death which sinners, or the "spiritually" lost, "spiritually" dead, experience when the Law smites them to the heart.[4]

In this condition are all the children of Adam, without exception, until they are delivered by grace in Christ.

In regard to Mary, the mother of the Saviour, Luther had, when speaking of her in the *Sermon in the Church Postils* already referred to, not rejected the opinion that, in order to be prepared for her high calling, she had been conceived without original sin, or without lust on the part of her parents, or had, at least,

[1] Op. Ex., ii, 272 sq., 266; xix, 18, 79. [2] Ibid., xi, 76 sqq. [3] Ibid., iv, 78.
[4] Ibid., xviii, 284. Erl. Ed., ix, 153; lii, 363; iv, 166; xiv, 106.

been sanctified in her mother's womb. He even himself supposes that her soul was, at all events, at its "infusion" into the embryonic body, purified from original sin. The sermon passed, in this form, into the edition of the *Postils* published in 1527. Luther afterwards, however, taught, in regard to Mary, simply that she was herself born in sin from sinful parents, just as we are; and that she also became blessed and free from sin by faith.[1]

Yet the possibility of being delivered from the state of sin by faith in Christ by no means dates, in Luther's view, from the time of the new covenant. It was included in the promises of God from the days of Adam (cf. the following section). And even then already Luther looks beyond the immediate circle to whom the promises were directly given to the heathen, very many of whom, instructed by the Israelites, became partakers of salvation. As Naaman through the agency of Elisha, the Ninevites through Jonah, the centurion Cornelius, so also many others —*e. g.*, Egyptian princes in the days of Joseph, Babylonian kings, and other oriental nationalities—were doubtless permitted to enjoy with God's chosen people His Word and justification by faith.[2] The ardor with which Luther dwells upon this thought is very significant when viewed in connection with his earnestness in denying the possibility of salvation to all who have not received the Word of grace. He feels impelled to extend, at least as widely as possible, the revelation of grace, even before the time when it should be freely offered to all the world.

Intermediate Section. Transition to the General Subject of Salvation in Christ.

Old and New Testament Revelations—Word and Visible Sign—Advantages under New Covenant.

We have found frequent occasion, even in the earlier stages of our investigations, to observe how decidedly Luther asserts an impartation of the salvation centering in Christ as realized already in the time preceding the Incarnation; and it is, in fact, very difficult to discriminate, from his writings, between the New

[1] Erl. Ed., xv, 53 sqq.; vi, 199, 189.

[2] Cf. especially Comm. ad. Gal., i, 304 sqq. Op. Ex., xi, 78 sq.

Testament state of grace and that which had been previously possible.

We long since met the declaration that, from the very time of the Fall, and then, more specifically, within the bounds of Israel, which was by no means under the dominion of the Law alone, the promises of divine grace have been proclaimed, by which all who have at any time believingly accepted them might be made righteous and saved. We have even been told that the forgiveness of sins was imparted through the Word of Christ just as well before His death as after it. By this it is not meant that salvation rests upon the Son of God, without reference to His incarnation and death. On the contrary, we are, from the very beginning, bidden to fix our eyes upon the incarnate Saviour. But God grants forgiveness before the work of Christ has been actually accomplished, just because, by virtue of His decree and the purpose of the Son Himself, the slain Lamb is before His view from the very beginning. And even among men in the earlier ages, not merely was grace announced in general terms, but the grace definitely associated with the person of the Son, who was to become incarnate and offer Himself as a sacrifice; and this announcement was made, not only in figures, but in express, intelligible language. "Everything must, from the beginning to the end of the world, depend upon the bodily coming of Christ" (His coming into the flesh). But He had thus already come to the ancient Fathers of all the early ages in their faith. They had Him in spirit, and were saved through Him just as we are. Hence we say: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and forever."[1]

Full forgiveness and the enjoyment of grace were offered to the first pair immediately after the Fall, in the promise concerning the seed of the woman. In faith upon this promise, they also hoped for eternal life and resurrection from the dead, as do we. God had further announced to them, also, that this seed of the woman was true God, as being Lord over the devil and his power, and, at the same time, that He was a person distinct from the One giving the promise. The promise was then made more definite, as given to Abraham: from *his* seed should come the Promised One, and in Him salvation to all nations. Luther then

[1] Supra, p. 76. Erl. Ed., x, 277 sq.; vii, 260 sq. Comm. ad. Gal., ii, 138.

quotes language employed by Jacob, which implies that he already knew "that the Son should come into the flesh, be crucified and rise again." It was further revealed to David, that from *his* flesh should descend Christ, the Son of God, who is like God, sitting upon the right hand of the Father. That He should spring, not from the union of man and woman, but from a virgin, was indicated by Isaiah (vii. 14). Eve had at first thought that her own first-born son might be the Saviour.[1] The patriarchs prayed in the proper spirit and in faith, although their faith looked only to the Christ who was to come, whereas we now pray in the name of Him who has already come.[2] The Trinity had also, in a general way, been revealed to them.[3] God had, moreover, then already affixed to His promise visible signs of His grace, to which faith was to cling, just as we now have "visible signs of grace" in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He never left His Church without external signs, by which we might know where He is to be certainly found. The tree of knowledge in Paradise served this purpose. The sacrifice which we then find Abel offering to the Lord undoubtedly rested upon an appointment of the divine Word. God had probably given a new visible sign for the encouragement of divine worship at the time of the revival of the Church under Enos (Gen. iv. 26). After the flood appeared the rainbow. The people to whom the promise had been given finally received circumcision as a constant sign, to be perpetuated until the coming of Christ. Of this sign might be said, in relation to the children of Abraham, what is now true of baptism among Christians: It was effectual, brought with it righteousness—not as an external ceremony, but by virtue of the promise connected with it—and that, too, in such a way that even circumcised children had, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the receptive faith (required) for (the acceptance of) the promise. Luther thus maintains the positions taken in his earlier writings as to the relation between the sacraments of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament.[4]

We see already, in the above, what Luther regards as the

[1] Erl. Ed., xvi. 216. Op. Ex., i, 241, 249 sqq.; iii, 67 sqq; xi, 112; i, 24 sqq., 285. Supra, Vol. I., p. 348; Vol. II., p. 239.

[2] Erl. Ed., l, 121.

[3] Op. Ex., i, 285; v, 551; xi, 112.

[4] Ibid., i, 315; ii, 78 sq.; iv, 75–84. Supra, Vol. I., pp. 246, 265, 396 sq.; Vol. II., pp. 53, 343.

essential requirement for the perpetuity of the *Congregation*, or *Church*, originating in Paradise: "These things being possessed, namely, the Word, and, after it, the visible sign divinely appointed, the Church is completed (*conficitur*)." Adam and Eve were brought back to God by the Word, and thus: "This was the first Church, regenerated by the Word and preserved by faith in Christ." Already in the sons of Adam appeared the division of the infant society into the merely nominal, hypocritical Church and the true Church abiding beneath the cross. God has since then always preserved the latter, although often in great weakness and sometimes but a remnant, as His congregation.[1] There is for the patriarchs of old and for us but one truth of divine promise, and hence, also, but one faith, one Spirit, one Christ, one Lord.[2]

But *what further, then, does the time of fulfilment, or of the New Covenant, bring with it*, in respect to the revelation and proffer of salvation?

Luther speaks, in this connection, of the free proclamation of the message of grace throughout the whole world, of the general, public, fervent publication of the certified divine covenant. The objective material of faith was, moreover, as he says, by no means so *clearly revealed* to the children of Israel as it has been to us since the incarnation of Christ. Thus, for example, the patriarchs and prophets probably understood the doctrine of the Trinity, but the common people were left in their simple faith in the One God, and, even for the most favored holy men of ancient times, truth of great importance remained unrevealed. Even the announcement of the supernatural conception of Christ, made by Isaiah, was not perfectly clear, and was not rightly understood by many saints of old, but was to receive complete illumination only through the New Testament. But we have, in the New Covenant particularly, the abundant and very specific proffer of the forgiveness of sins and salvation, with all its blessings, to each individual believer.[3] The saints, from the beginning of the world, had been compelled to look for consolation to the general promises. Although David received private absolution

[1] Op, Ex., ii, 79; xviii, 279 sqq.; i, 320 sqq.; iii, 68, 55 sq. Erl. Ed., xvi, 217.

[2] Erl. Ed., xlv, 286.

[3] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 266, 397 note.

after one defection, for his other sins he was compelled to depend upon the general absolution and proclamation of the divine Word. But, now that the Gospel has been revealed, it announces forgiveness of sins in general and *in particular*. If we consider how freely the message of salvation is now proclaimed, how God Himself in His Word, in baptism, in the Lord's Supper, in the administration of the keys, speaks to us and assures us of forgiveness, as the minister of the Church, or any Christian brother, in God's name pronounces absolution and calls back from the very misery of hell the despairing soul, we must realize what exalted glory, what great power, what priceless miracles we possess in comparison with what the ancient saints enjoyed.[1]

The saints of the Old Covenant had also temporal promises, such as we no longer possess, since God has appointed no temporal kingdom for us. We have enough, however, in the admonition and assurance: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc. The mention of the *spiritual character* of the kingdom of heaven brings at once into view the difference between the New Testament Church and that under the old economy. In the congregation of Israel, and thus among true believers of that day, Christ had a temporal kingdom, with laws for eating, drinking, etc. In this kingdom prevailed the rule of natural succession, to which the priesthood in particular was bound. In the congregation of the New Covenant Christ has His spiritual kingdom. This is established by no law, but alone through the Gospel and faith, Christ with His peace reigning in hearts renewed by grace, and His Law being inscribed upon them. The Church is not a multitude of persons, who must be held together by external government. It is not bound to any outward succession. Unbound to places or persons, it is everywhere and only where the Word is—a congregation of the spiritual sons of Christ. Luther could consistently say of the Church, as thus described, that it was just beginning to be actualized in its true character—that it began only with the New Covenant. The "people of Israel," or "the holy synagogue," was at its end in the time of Christ, and the Church in its beginning.[2]

[1] Op. Ex., xi, 141. Supra, p. 243. Erl. Ed., vi, 225 sq. Op. Ex., i, 245, sq. Erl. Ed., xlvi, 269. Briefe, iv, 481. Op. Ex., iii, 217 sq; xi, 135 sq., 293.

[2] Op. Ex., xi, 141. Weimar. Pred. xliv, sq. Op. Ex. iii, 56. Erl. Ed., xviii, 233 sq.; xii, 49; x, 275.

We have, therefore, in the course of the investigations yet before us, to treat, with Luther, of SALVATION, as first clearly and freely offered in the New Covenant—as the incarnate Son of God has revealed it and achieved it in accordance with the decree of God and the antecedent promises—as it is now imparted to us in its entire fulness and in connection with the special means distinctive of the New Covenant.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

Introductory.—Intimate Relation Between the Person and the Work of Christ.

CHRIST'S WORK INCLUDES SACRIFICE AND CONTINUED AGENCY—INVOLVES BOTH NATURES—MYSTICAL UNION ITS GOAL—"SACRAMENTUM" AND "EXEMPLUM"—CONTEMPLATION OF WORK LEADS TO DOCTRINE OF PERSON.

The intimate and interchangeable relation existing between the doctrine of the Person and that of the Work of Christ is very clearly manifest in the theology of Luther. He is himself at great pains to impress it upon us. To this, attention has been called in connection with his presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity.[1] In tracing the relation of the work of Christ to His person, we must, moreover, combine with the *work completed* once for all time in laying the foundations for the salvation of men, the *continuous activity* of the Saviour upon us and in us and that which is thereby effected within those who believe—inasmuch as the latter depend also upon the person of Christ as their necessary premise and permanent basis. We, too, are by grace to become, through Him, the sons of God in regeneration. Therefore, despite all the specific difference between Him, as the eternal and natural Son of God, and us, who are originally sinful creatures, His own image is again to be impressed upon us. Of all that He has we may boast;[2] and whatever He did on His

[1] Supra, p. 311.

[2] Erl. Ed. xlv, 5; xv, 392. Upon this point, and upon the general subject of Luther's Christology, compare the rich and fervent presentation in Dorner's Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi, ii, 510 sqq., with which, however, as will be manifest in the following pages, I am not able in all points to agree.

own account, or accomplished for us, is now, by virtue of His working in us, to find a copy in our own lives and conduct.

This relation between our own conduct and the working of Christ, as the source and pattern of our Christian activity, will not only be more fully revealed in our review of the doctrine of the life of the regenerate, but will throw light also upon the doctrine of the work of Christ Himself.

The relation of the work of Christ to His person, or nature, is such as to *involve equally His divine and His human nature*, and that in such a way that the two must be conceived as combined in the most intimate personal unity. The object in view in the work of Christ is, as will be hereafter more explicitly set forth, the providing of a ransom for our sin. This must be one more exalted than could be furnished through angels or prophets, none less exalted than that to be rendered by the Son of God.[1] The object was the conquest and removal of sin, law, death and hell, and the bestowal of eternal life and righteousness. For this was required an eternal, divine Person—one who should be by nature God, with invincible, eternal righteousness, power and grace.[2] In order that sin and death may be outweighed, God Himself must be included in the counter-weight of the scales. Thus, Christ not only lifts off the burden of sin and death, but gives also eternal life.[3] This positive work especially, the giving of grace and life, the doing of that which Jesus promises in John xiv. 13, 14, belongs to Him alone, because He is God.[4] But the required ransom must be paid by Jesus, the conflict with sin, death and the devil waged in His death. His blood must be laid upon the scale of the balance. But it would be possible for Him to suffer and die only if He were truly a man. We must, moreover, have a Saviour who is also our brother, of our own flesh and blood, like to us in all things, save that He must be without sin. As such, He represents me at the right hand of God, as one who is also my flesh and blood, yea, my brother. It is only thus that He belongs to us, and that we can appropriate Him to ourselves. Thus, having become like to us in all things, from His

[1] Erl. Ed., xlv, 316.

[2] Comm. ad. Gal., ii, 20–25, 157; cf. supra Vol. I., p. 414.

[3] Erl. Ed., xlix, 3; xxv, 312 sq.

[4] Comm. ad. Gal., i, 51 sq. Erl. Ed., xlix, 123.

very conception in the womb, and having gone through the whole course of our human life, He has also purified and hallowed our entire human experience—all our natural acts, our eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, toiling, etc.—so that, although our life is unclean by virtue of *our* flesh and blood, it becomes for His sake pleasing to God, yea, a veritable sanctuary. By mingling Himself with our flesh He has become, as it were, the divine leaven in the corrupted mass.[1]

We may include the *entire content* of Luther's doctrine of the work and person of Christ, and, indeed, the whole doctrine of salvation as he conceived it,[2] under the language of one of his earliest letters, according to which the believer may say to Christ: "Thou hast taken me to Thyself, and hast given Thyself to me; thou hast taken to Thyself what Thou wast not, and hast given to me what I was not"—or under the declaration, found in the *Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, that "what Christ has, becomes the property of the soul, and what the soul has, becomes the property of Christ." In order that there may come to us from Him righteousness, life and heavenly blessedness, and that our sins may in Him be blotted out, He must be the Son of God: in order that He might take our sins upon Himself and might really belong to us, He must be of our flesh and blood. In language the loftiest and boldest, the *Church Postils* assert: God empties out Himself and Christ upon us, and pours Himself into us, and draws us up into Himself, so that He becomes entirely and completely humanized, and we become entirely and completely deified.[3]

In tracing the historical development of Luther's doctrine of the combined work and person of Christ, we must go back to the period of his special devotion to the study of Mysticism.[4] The Christ *for* us was never, for him, lost in the Christ *in* us. Although he represents that which we are to experience, undergo and suffer in Christ as analogous to the experiences of Christ Himself, yet he always recognized in the latter, not a mere pattern, but, on the contrary, the immediate objective occasion

[1] Erl. Ed., xlv, l. c.; xxv, l. c. Comm. ad. Gal., ii, l. c. Erl. Ed., xlv, 318; xviii, 225; xx, 157 sqq. Op. Ex., vi, 35.

[2] Supra, Vol. I., pp. 163, 170.

[3] Briefe, i, 17. Supra, Vol. I., p. 414. Erl. Ed., xv, 238.

[4] Cf. Vol. I., p. 169 sq.

for the former, and based upon them especially the canceling of guilt, upon which, for him, all else depended. But he very soon advanced to a sharper discrimination between the two. We may trace this process along the line of his proposition, that Christ and His sufferings for us are a "*sacrament*" and an "*example*."[1] The former he always places first, basing the latter upon it. In it, however, he combines directly the two conceptions, that in the death of Christ our sin is canceled, and that through His death our own inner crucifixion is to be accomplished in our fellowship with Him, and a new man to be awakened within us. In the power of the new life thus secured, we are then constantly to imitate the example of Christ. Thus, after all, the former conception is not as yet so fixed in its distinct significance as we find it at a later date. In a sermon of the year 1518, entitled *De passione Christi*,[2] Luther at first dwells only upon the idea that Christ by His death as a "*sacramentum*" proclaims our spiritual death, and Himself slays our old man, that has lived so sinfully, and awakens the new man—although he afterwards asserts also, that Christ assumed for us the charges resting against us, and thus vanquished all our sins, and swallowed them up in Himself. We find a similar treatment of the subject in the passages above referred to.[3] The less the work which Christ accomplished primarily and objectively for the cancelation of our sins is separately emphasized, and the more the eye is turned directly upon our own inner crucifixion with Him, the less readily could faith, as distinguished from self-surrender or resignation, be clearly conceived in its peculiar and essential character, as simple trust in the Saviour. The "resignation" here spoken of soon disappears, and we find no mention of it, for example, in the *Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, where faith appears distinctly as a positive apprehension of Christ and His message of salvation. Yet here, too, that which Christ does for us and the positive force which He introduces into our lives are regarded as standing in the most intimate possible connection. Still later, in a sermon of *Good Friday, 1522*,[4] Luther, while, indeed, first declaring that Christ in His death endured the torments which we had merited, proceeds, in attempting to

[1] Vol. I., p. 173.
[2] Vol. I., p. 171 sq.
[3] Löscher ii, 587 sqq.
[4] Erl. Ed., xvii, 74, 77.

direct us in our fear of death, to speak chiefly of our *surrendering ourselves willingly to death* according to the *example* of Christ, declaring that God says to us: "Accept the punishment, and thou shalt thus become pure," and that death is thus no longer a punishment for us, but a sweet medicine. Luther still speaks in this way, although he had already long before [1] taught simply that we are to cling to Christ, and to believe firmly that in Him all things are overcome. The turning point is fully and finally reached only in antagonizing the mysticism of Carlstadt.[2] An inner and harmonious conception of these two elements of the work of Christ we shall still find characteristic of Luther; but, in this harmony, the distinct significance of each is henceforth more clearly seen. This will become further evident under the discussion of the application of salvation. We shall meet again the distinction between *sacramentum* and *exemplum* in that drawn between "*donum*" and "*exemplum*." [3] In the term "*donum*" are again included the benefits of salvation; but of these, the first-mentioned is, that all the past sins committed by those who believe are, so far as their guilt is concerned, blotted out.[4]

We have been speaking of the view of the *Work* of Christ revealed in the writings of Luther. But from the very nature of the case, with increasing clearness of apprehension as to His work, His *Person*, in its essential character as historically revealed, became the more distinctly and clearly apprehended by the eye of faith. And it was just in the midst of the conflicts aroused by the Carlstadt theories that Luther's doctrine of the Saviour's person assumed its more precise form, *i. e.*, in the controversies upon the presence of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Throughout the entire discussion, however, the controlling motive in Luther's mind continued to be his desire to have a Saviour, in whose person, through a true union of the divine and the human natures, should be assured the needful prerequisites for the accomplishment of His saving work.

It remains for us now to examine separately and in detail the allied doctrines of the person and the work of Christ.

[1] Cf. e. g., the dissertation of A, D. 1519. Erl. Ed., xxi, 260 sqq.

[2] Supra, p. 31 sq.

[3] Cf. also, Erl. Ed., viii, 3.

[4] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 330.

1. *The Person of Christ.*

DIVINITY AND HUMANITY—RELATION OF TWO NATURES—THE UNION A MYSTERY NECESSITATED BY THE FALL—DIVINE NATURE NOT MODIFIED—HUMAN NATURE DEVELOPED—CAN DIVINE NATURE SUFFER?—IS THE BODY OMNIPRESENT?—INSEPARABLE UNION—"COMMUNICATIO IDIOMATUM"—DOES LUTHER TOO HIGHLY EXALT THE HUMAN NATURE?—PECULIARITY OF HIS DOCTRINE.

That Christ is "true God, born of the Father in eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary" (*Smaller Catechism*), was ever for Luther a fundamental article of the Christian faith.

In proof of the claim that Christ is not, as the Arians teach, "God in name," but a "*natural, or essential*" God, he appeals especially to the above-mentioned works which are attributed to the Saviour, and which presuppose a divine nature. The whole Godhead, says he, dwells in Christ bodily and completely. Whoso sees Him, sees the Father. Thus our faith is entirely comprehended in this Christ. I need now no longer flutter toward heaven in my thoughts. If I only hear that Christ is the true God, I find that better part which Mary (Lk. x. 42) chose, and need seek nothing more.[1]

This God I have truly, according to Luther, *in my human flesh and blood.* There is no difference whatever between His flesh and ours, except that His is without sin. Yea, the more profoundly we can bring Him into our flesh, the better. He is much nearer to us than was Eve to Adam.[2] It was needful for Him to be begotten, according to His human nature, without the intervention of a man, in order that He might be free from original sin.[3] Luther clung also to the opinion, prevalent in the Middle Ages, that, as Mary conceived without sin, so she brought forth also without pain or physical injury, and always remained a virgin. As a bee deftly extracts the honey from a flower without injuring the latter, so the Holy Spirit caused Christ to emerge from the womb of the Virgin, because He brought with Him a true fleshly nature, but without sin. But Luther maintains most stoutly, that the Child in the womb of its mother received from

[1] Cf., e. g., Erl. Ed., xlix, 120–126.

[2] Erl. Ed., x, 131 sq.; vi, 155; i, 197. [3] Cf. supra, p. 347.

her everything which any natural child receives from its mother, only without sin—that the Virgin "was required to contribute of her seed and natural blood"—that He did not pass through her like a reflection, or shadow, or as a ray of the sun passes through painted glass—that, in the act of delivery itself, the womb of Mary fulfilled its natural office (only without receiving any injury)—that a body was not made in heaven for Christ, and then passed through the body of Mary. In these specifications, he had in view Anabaptist and Schwenkfeldian theories. He regards it, further, as significant that Christ's ancestor, Judah, to whom he traces the lineage of Mary also, was guilty of incest. It was appointed that Christ should receive His human nature from flesh thus fearfully defiled, in order thus, although it was for His own person purified in the act of conception, to become a sinner for us. Luther calls Christ, with reference to this human nature, also "created," and considers this as an expression inaccurate only when used—as in the ignorant ravings of Schwenkfeld—in the abstract title, "creature" (*Geschöpf*).[1] Among the elements which belong to the true humanity of Jesus, Luther emphasizes particularly the soul.[2] And, as he ascribes to the Son of God, as He lived on earth, the truly human experiences of eating, drinking, waking, sleeping, etc., he, even more distinctly, represents Him as entering into the most profound agonies of soul which are endured by man when burdened with sin and distressed at heart. This is, indeed, the very chief element in his doctrine of the atoning work of Christ.

But what is Luther's conception of the Mutual Relations of the Two Natures as united in the Person of Christ?

This union he always regards as a MYSTERY absolutely transcending our powers of understanding. He designedly emphasizes the broad chasm separating humanity and divinity, in order the more to magnify the amazing grace displayed in the act of condescension by which God entered the former. There, says he, two diverse things, the Creator and creature, which are as far apart as nothing and something, or everything, are nevertheless united. "There a proportion has been established, which was

[1] Erl. Ed., x, 305 sq.; xxxvii, 71; xli, 191; xlv, 284. Op. Ex., xvi, 281. Erl. Ed., xv, 298; x, 131; xxix, 53; xlv, 317; xvi, 236 (A. D. 1546); xlv, 316 sq.; lxiii, 339 sq.; x, 131. Op. Ex., ix, 173 sq. Jena, i, 568 b, sq.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxx, 364; xxiv, 323.

impossible (*i. e.*, for reason), between the finite and the infinite."[1] Of an incarnation of the Son of God, effected not merely in the interest of human redemption, but originally necessary for the realization of the ideal of manhood, he has no thought. The idea elsewhere expressed, that subsequent creations of God, after the completion of the original creative work, are consequences of the Fall, he applies also to the birth of God's Son from human flesh.[2] When he represents Lucifer as taking umbrage already at the incarnation of the Son, he means a prevision of the incarnation, as a fact which should contribute to the redemption of men from the sin and misery which were also foreseen.[3] When he says that all words receive in Christ a new meaning, as, for example, "creature" indicates no more something separated from God, but something inseparably united with God, and that, accordingly, we must now learn to speak with new tongues, he does not mean thereby that we must receive new disclosures concerning created things in general, their specific nature and their relation to God: he speaks only of that special created thing which has in Christ become specifically so unified with God that we may acknowledge, despite the apparent contradiction in terms, even the maxim: "Christ is a creature."[4] The theophanies in human form in the days of the patriarchs have, in the view of Luther, a significant relation to the future incarnation. In them appears the "Son of God (who is) to be incarnated" (*incarnandus*).[5] But this by no means involves the idea that such theophanies, together with the actual incarnation, would have occurred had sin not entered. He regards, finally, as peculiarly significant, the creation after the likeness of God. He calls it an absurd proposition, or contradiction in terms, to assert that man, made in the image of God, does not differ in his animal life from the beasts. He finds, on the other hand, in this characteristic of man an indication that God would reveal Himself to the world in the man, Christ.[6] But we must here be on our guard lest we attribute to Luther himself the conclusion, that what was already indicated at the creation, and even in the

[1] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 2. Jena, i. 574 b. Op. Ex., vii, 148 sq.: cf. also supra, p. 145 sq.

[2] Op. Ex., i, 98.

[3] Supra, p. 331.

[4] Jena, i, 568 b, 569, 568 a.

[5] Op. Ex., viii, 171.

[6] Ibid., i, 109.

original nature of man, would necessarily have come to pass even though sin had not appeared; for he does not here carry out the idea to such a length, and he elsewhere decidedly rejects the conclusion in question. That there must lie in human nature itself some point of attachment for the impartation of divinity, we must infer from the impartation of divine life which is to be actually effected in the case of all believers. But the thoughts which may here occur *to us*, Luther himself does not thus pursue. The impartation of the divine has its eternal cause and possibility entirely in God, by virtue of His love, which is in its very nature condescension. The "humility (humiliation) of the Son of God," at which the proud angels took offence,[1] is an essential attribute of God. But Luther himself knows of no necessity in the original nature of man which would have required God to condescend to the extent of incarnation in human form. Whilst declaring the occasion of the greatest act of divine mercy, the birth of the Son of God, to have been the misery of our sinful state,[2] he always, when speaking of the development which would have marked the career of man had sin not interfered, represents simply that man would then, after the divine life which he would have led even upon earth, have passed over into perfect spiritual life in manly innocence and heavenly glory.[3] He still—despite the divine image in man, and notwithstanding the loving nature of God—regards the natural chasm between God and the creature as too great to allow the thought that, without the dire necessity introduced by sin, it would have been needful for the loving God to condescend to that union with the creature which has now been effected in the One Saviour, and which ever remains essentially different from the impartations of divine life granted to believers.

In what light, then, are we to regard the *two natures after their union* has, by an inscrutable miracle, been actually accomplished in the incarnation of God, the Son?

Luther always thought of the union as effected in such a way that, when Christ began to be man, He, at the same time, also began to be God.[4] Nor will he ever tolerate the idea that when God thus became incarnate *any change whatever occurred in Him*. He denies, especially, that this is to be inferred from the

[1] Op. Ex., i, 141. [2] Ibid., i, 98.
[3] Supra, pp. 340, 343. [4] Erl. Ed., vii, 196 (A. D. 1521).

declaration of Phil. ii. 5 sqq., in which Christ is said to have humbled—or emptied—Himself. We have already considered the explanation of this passage which he adopted as early as A. D. 1518.[1] After having pronounced it a "dark" saying,[2] he, in a sermon appearing in 1525,[3] still further expounds it. The language of the entire passage has, in his view, no relation to the two natures in Christ, nor to His nature in general. Surely Christ did not become in nature, or kind, a servant. He understands the "emptying Himself" as indicating only the deportment of Christ—that He bore Himself in humility and in the most menial services of love, and that, too, during His entire career on earth; just as we Christians, who hold the most exalted possessions, should conduct ourselves toward our neighbors. Accordingly, Christ *had* the divine nature, even while thus deporting Himself. With the divine nature, He still *had* also the divine deportment. He *was* in the form of God—had this form naturally, as well as the essential divine nature. It *properly* belonged to Him from eternity. Of the form of a servant, Paul does not say that Christ *was in* it, but only that He "took it upon" Himself. Yet Christ did not deport Himself outwardly as a God, did not take upon Himself the divine form in which He *was* (although it belonged to Him, and was involved in His very nature, yet He did not employ it in His intercourse with the men to whom He ministered). Thus, we can say also of God Himself, when He is angry, that He hides Himself, does not permit us to see the divine deportment (which yet essentially characterizes Him). In general, Luther says: Whatever is said of the humiliation of Christ is to be attributed to the man; for divine nature can be neither humbled nor exalted.[4] Upon this point we shall find no change in the later writings of the Reformer. Even when he speaks of a participation of the divine nature in the sufferings of Christ, he by no means admits that any change whatever has been experienced by the divine nature itself. God "descends without change or alteration of His divinity," whilst He at the same time "remains eternally above."[5]

The further development of Luther's doctrine after the controversy with Carlstadt and the Sacramentarians is, however, at once brought into view when we inquire more closely as to the *mutual*

[1] Vol. I., p. 416 sq. [2] Erl. Ed., vii, 196. [3] Ibid., viii, 156 sqq.
[4] Ibid., vii, 185, A. D. 1521. [5] Ibid., xlvi, 328.

relations existing between the two natures in the person and work of Christ.

The first indication of more extended discrimination is seen in the fact that Luther, while always maintaining the possession of the true divinity and true humanity by Christ from the very beginning of His life, yet, in certain passages, appears to be chiefly concerned to decide when the Scriptures refer to the humanity and when to the divinity of Christ. This is noticeable in the passage of the year 1521 above cited,[1] and in the *Sermon for St. James' Day*,[2] which, although first appearing in the *Church Postils* in 1527, undoubtedly, in view of expressions which it contains concerning the sufferings of Christ, appeared before A. D. 1525. His motive in these discussions is to guard against the opinion that, in view of such passages as Matt. xx. 23, Christ cannot be acknowledged as true God, while, at the same time, avoiding the conclusion of those who, to escape the former inference, so interpret the expressions referred to as to make of Christ an "omnipotent man," to the detriment of His true human nature.

Concerning the *humanity of Christ*, he now says, further, that, as in the case of any other holy man, it *did not at all times consider, purpose, or observe all things;* that Christ did not in His heart always have all things in view, but looked upon them as God led Him and brought them to His notice. Although thus acknowledging that the all-knowing and all-seeing God was present in person in Christ, he infers from it for Christ as a man merely that He was full of grace and wisdom, that He might be able to judge and teach in regard to everything which came to His notice. Hence, we cannot substitute for the words "the Son knoweth not," in Mk. xiii. 22, the statement, "He does not wish to declare it."[3] The comments of A. D. 1521 upon Luke ii. 52, are here in point:[4] The statement that Christ increased in spirit and wisdom is to be understood of His humanity, which was an instrument and house of the divinity. Although He was, indeed, at all times full of the Holy Spirit, yet the Holy Spirit did not at all times move Him, but, according to varying circumstances, aroused Him to this or that undertaking. Thus the Spirit

[1] Erl. Ed., vii, 185.
[2] Ibid., xv, 420 sqq.
[3] Ibid., vii.
[4] Ibid., x, 300 sq. (A. D. 1521).

had been in Him also from the time of His conception, but had, just as His body grew, sunken ever deeper into His being and moved Him more and more. The declaration of Phil. ii. 7 is here cited in illustration. Just as all men naturally increase in body and spirit, so, it is said, did Christ also, having become man, deport Himself. According to these passages, the divine nature was also present in its entirety in the person of Christ from the time of His conception. But the humanity of Christ is not, therefore, to be thought of as already thoroughly permeated by the divinity, this permeation being accomplished only gradually in the "sinking-in of the Spirit"; and even the adult Christ is not always and absolutely, as to His humanity, impelled by the divinity that yet dwells within Him. How it is possible to actually conceive of this presence of the full divinity, prominent among whose attributes is that of omniscience, in connection with the development and presence of the humanity, and of the human soul, which is not omniscient, is a problem which Luther makes no attempt to solve. It is, finally, of the humanity of Jesus distinctively that he understands the scriptural declarations, that Christ has been appointed heir of all things. It is in His human nature, too, that He is above all things, and all things are subject to Him. This is inferred upon the ground that the divine nature cannot be exalted nor appointed heir.[1] He had already, in 1518, interpreted in a similar way of the humanity of Christ the language of Ps. cx. 1.[2] He does not, however, there apply the words to the Saviour's humanity in the period of His life on earth, but has in view simply the now exalted Lord.

As to the *divine nature*, we have learned that it *cannot be humbled*, and particularly, also, that it *cannot suffer*. In one passage,[3] he insists upon this so strenuously that he does not even make any reference to the communion of the divine and human which must even here be maintained, as involved in the unity of the person of Christ, and necessary in order to give efficacy to His sufferings. "Where," says he, "the Scriptures declare that Christ has suffered, etc., no one is so stupid as not to understand that they are speaking of Him as a man; for *God cannot suffer and die*." It is not here stated, as Luther maintained especially against Zwingli, that we may and must also say

[1] Erl. Ed., vii, 186. [2] Ibid., xl, 7, 9. [3] Ibid., xv, 422.

that God suffers. This we find, however, distinctly asserted before any thought of possible utility in meeting opposing arguments can have been entertained,[1] and the assertion is here as definite as in later years, and supported by the same illustrations: "Although the two natures are diverse, it is yet One person, so that everything which Christ does or suffers God has certainly done or suffered, although still the experience in question has befallen only One nature; as, when I speak of a man's wounded leg, I say, 'the man is wounded,' although his soul is not wounded, nor his entire body," etc.

In the great mutlitude of his utterances during this period concerning Christ, Luther conducts us no farther in the discussion of such more precise questions in regard to the relation of the two natures. The occasion for more specific development of the doctrine was found only in the disputes which arose among the adherents of the evangelical party.

There were two leading points which were brought into prominence in the controversy, although both were directly connected with the one fundamental doctrine of the unity of the truly divine-human person of the Saviour.

The first question was, *Is it a mere form of speech to say, that the Son of God suffered?* Was it, in reality, only the human nature that actually suffered? The reply which Luther gives in his *Sermons of A. D. 1525*,[2] and, more particularly, in discussion with Zwingli,[3] merely maintains the positions which he had before, as we have seen, asserted. How much importance he attached to the question, especially on account of the inner significance, or efficacy, of the sufferings of Christ, is most impressively revealed in his tract against Zwingli.

The second point of discussion was the *exaltation of Christ according to His humanity and the consequent omnipresence of His body*. Starting with the position of the glorified Christ, Luther now claims expressly also for the period of His earthly life, even from the moment of His conception, that the Son of man is, with His body, at the right hand of God, and hence in all places.[4] This claim—that such attributes are to be ascribed to the human nature and the body of Christ from the first

[1] Erl. Ed., vii, 186. [2] Supra, p. 82 sq.
[3] Supra, p. 134 sq. [4] Supra, pp. 78, 110 sq., 117 sq., 135 sq.

moment of the incarnation—undeniably leads us beyond the earlier representations of Luther and aside from the path which he[1] previously appeared to have chosen. How, upon this theory, shall it be possible to maintain such a development of the human nature, by the only gradual "sinking-in" of the divine, as was asserted in the earlier writings? But it will be observed that Luther, even at the earlier period referred to, did not further pursue the theory then presented; and that he, on the other hand, had already at that time asserted, as coincident with such a development of the human nature of Christ, *such* a presence of God in connection with the humanity in the person of Christ as itself already manifested a lack of clearness in his conception of the human nature. It was the same anxiety to maintain that complete and essential unity of the divine and human in Christ upon which the efficacy of the atonement depends which, having inspired the strong statements above noted concerning the "sufferings of God," now led him to the new utterances by which the reality of the human nature appears to us to be imperiled. It was by no means an anxiety to maintain merely an acknowledgment of the divine as present in Christ, but rather the desire to gain assent to the claim, that the Son of God is present in the very man Christ, and that the divine is present nowhere without the man. But it is, at least, open to question whether, under the method pursued by Luther in his attempt to fortify this position, the man can really be still regarded as true man.

If we would now epitomize the total result of the discussions of the person of Christ found in the controversial writings of the period, we must, first of all, recognize that the *Subject* here discussed is *Christ in the Inseparable Union of the Two Natures*. Whereas the Son of God "assumed" complete human nature, and is, therefore, Himself the active Subject in the actual process of incarnation,[2] after the act of incarnation the Person is not God alone, but always "God and man," the "inseparable Person formed of God and man,"[3] called also itself, on account of the God incarnate in it, an "eternal" Person.[4]

[1] Vid. Sermons in Erl. Ed., vii, 185, and x, 300 sq.

[2] As to the relation to the entire Trinity, vid. supra, p. 317.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxx, 364. Cf. later, Erl. Ed., xxv, 318; xlvi, 366.

[4] Ibid., xxx, 364.

From this union it follows that we may truthfully say: the Son of God suffers. We may "ascribe to the entire person that which befalls one part of the person, inasmuch as both parts are One person."[1] And to the person (to whichever side any property or experience in question may naturally in the first instance belong), we may indifferently apply the terms: Son of God or Son of man, God or man. Thus, says Luther, do all the ancient teachers and modern theologians teach, in harmony with the Scriptures. It may assist us in the more accurate analysis of the questions which arise concerning the teaching of Luther upon this subject, if we bear in mind the definitions of the later Lutheran dogmaticians. We find here in Luther what the latter designate as the *genus idiomaticum* and the *genus apotelesmaticum* of the *communicatio idiomatum*. What belongs to the one nature is attributed to the entire person, which is God and man, whether it be called God or be called man; and the person is always present, with both its natures, in everything which it undertakes.

Luther had not as yet, as we have seen, expressly asserted the omnipresence of the body.[2] It was, however, for him, directly involved already in the position that God and man are inseparably in Christ—that God is man. The question concerning the omnipresence of the body of Christ, he afterwards declared, has to do not with the *works* of the two natures, but with their *essential character* (nature);[3] where God is, there must also be the human nature of Christ.[4] If we now conceive of this omnipresence of the body of Christ, in its co-existence with God, as an "attribute," the human nature in Christ itself appears to be thereby enriched with an essentially divine attribute. It is here not meant to declare only[5] that the Son of man is omnipresent, since His humanity, indeed, is not omnipresent; yet the person who is human is omnipresent in a way analogous to that in which we are to understand the assertion that the Son of God suffers. We have here really what the dogmaticians call the *genus majestaticum*—a communication in which the human nature, in its union with the divine, secures for itself a participation in the loftiest prerogatives of the divine glory—a communication in which the relation

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 204. Cf. supra, p. 134 sq.
[2] Supra, p. 135 sq.
[3] Erl. Ed., xxx, 207.
[4] Supra, p. 139 sq.
[5] Supra, p. 137.

is not, as in the other two *genera*, a reciprocal one, since it cannot be said, reversing the terms, that the divine nature is degraded. Yet Luther does not, when speaking of this "omnipresence," proceed to treat of the communication of other divine attributes, as he does not even here call into requisition the conception formally embodied in the term, "attribute." The inference is at once suggested to our minds, that, as the presence of God is one all-efficacious, so, likewise, must the body of Christ be present everywhere as all-efficacious; and Luther goes at least so far as to say: Christ (and that not only as the ascended Saviour) "also as a man" has all things under Him, and reigns over them.[1] Yet he carries the deduction here no farther. He was content to maintain that which appeared to be immediately involved in the *existence* of the humanity of Christ in union with His divinity, and which was denied by his sacramentarian opponents. It is only in another connection, *i. e.*, in the discussion of a special point having direct bearing upon the efficacious work of Christ in the securing of salvation, which arose in the treatment of the question of the benefit of the flesh of Christ, that we find the description of the human nature itself as being interpenetrated and adorned by an impartation of the divine. The flesh itself, it is then said, is full of divinity, of eternal mercy, life, etc.[2] In support of such claims, Luther appeals to the union of the Son of God with humanity, and, with special emphasis, to the (agency of the) Holy Ghost, of whom this flesh was born, and who dwells in it and works through it.[3]

Luther does not explain in how far it may be proper, under such a conception of the humanity of Christ, to speak of it as a true human nature. It is worthy of note that he calls attention to an "existence in heaven" and, at the same time, upon earth, as attributable also, according to the Scriptures, to other men, *i. e.*, true Christians, but not, indeed, as involving for them an omnipresence.[4] It should be noted, also, that he disclaims any intention of making the body of Christ a "second infinite" (*alterum infinitum*),[5] but without offering any solution of the questions which here naturally arise.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 65.
[2] Supra, p. 125.
[3] Erl. Ed., xxx, 99 sq., 131.
[4] Supra, p. 140 sq.
[5] Ibid.

The most complete and profound union and communion of the two natures in the person of Christ is the point which Luther still endeavors, with all possible energy, to maintain in his expositions of this doctrine after the conflict with Zwingli.

The formula for the person of the Saviour is briefly: "*Deus et homo unus est Christus.*" Luther did not approve the proposed substitution (to harmonize with the logical demand for identical predication [1]) of, "The Son of God bearing (*sustentans*) human nature is God," for the simple, "The man is God." The expression, "*sustentare*," seems even monstrous to him; yet he is willing to allow it, if it be correctly understood.[2]

He is fond of employing—following, as he says, the Fathers and the Scholastics [3]—the expression, "*communicatio idiomatum*," to denote the relation of the two natures to one another. He defines "*idioma*" as: "what belongs to one nature, or is an attribute of it—as dying, suffering, eating, drinking, or being born —is an *idioma* of humanity; and an *idioma* of divinity, that it is immortal, omnipotent, or infinite, or that it is not born, does not eat, sleep," etc.[4]

He now displays, however, much more earnestness when treating of this communication of attributes than was the case in his earlier employment of the term, insisting upon its completeness, its reality, and, with special emphasis, upon its reciprocity.[5]

The attributes of both natures are, as he says, by virtue of the union of the natures in Christ, given and ascribed to the entire person of Christ "*in concreto*," in consequence of which this person is to be described as God and as man. Luther here then reiterates at greater length his previous declarations upon this point. God suffers, he declares, and dies; Mary is the mother of God. Conversely, that which belongs properly to the Son of God is, on account of the person, ascribed to the Son of the Virgin, and we rightly say: "This man created the stars." For this, he is not willing to substitute: "This Son of God, bearing

[1] Vid. supra, p. 145. [2] Briefe, vi, 285. Jena, i, 569 b.

[3] Erl. Ed., xlvi, 365. Comm. ad. Gal., i, 382.

[4] Erl. Ed., xxv, 309.

[5] Compare, for the following, in addition to passages specially cited, Erl. Ed., xlvi, 330 sqq., 365 sqq.; xlvii, 1 sq., 175 sqq; xlix, 128, 135 sqq.; xxxvii, 89; xxv, 309 sqq. Op. Ex., xxiii, 467 sqq. Jena, 1, 568 b.

(*sustentans*) human nature, is the Creator of the world." [1] In meeting the misunderstanding of this language which would infer that the human nature had created, he himself declares: "That person existing as man, or having an assumed human nature, created the heavens." [2] Nor does he only declare, that the attributes of both natures are to be ascribed to the person, but he holds, also, that the attribute of one nature is ascribed to the other *nature*, that being attributed to the divine nature which belongs naturally to the human. He then, indeed, at once again substitutes the name of the person for "the divine nature," or, instead of the declaration that we are to ascribe attributes of the human nature, such as dying, to the divine nature, the simple statement: "The Son of God has died." The Church, he declares, believes that "not only the human, but also the divine nature, or *the true God* suffered for us." [3] And, in meeting the misunderstanding of this which would infer a "mortal divinity," he says more precisely: "The person existing as God, or having a divine nature, is mortal." [4] But, cautioning only against such misunderstandings, he designedly employs the above expression publicly and without hesitation. In one passage,[5] he proceeds to speak of an impartation of all human attributes to the other nature. Melanchthon had reported to him a rumor that a certain pastor, Gilbert, "insolently and boldly maintains that the divinity suffered," and that a strife had arisen in the congregation of the latter as to whether the divine nature in Christ had suffered, whereupon he (Gilbert) had announced as his view the proposition: "That the whole Christ (*Christum integrum*), consisting of two natures, suffered." To this Luther declared that he would object only if it were thereby meant "that the divinity was separate, and suffered separately because it was also in the humanity." He himself proposes, in order to avoid all misunderstanding, to express the doctrine as follows: "That the person, consisting of a divine and a human nature, truly suffered." [6] We observe what great and very peculiar importance Luther attached to the communication from the human to the divine

[1] Briefe, vi, 285. [2] Ibid., v, 483.
[3] Erl. Ed., xlvi, 365, 330; xlix, 137. Briefe, vi, 292.
[4] Briefe, v, 483. [5] Ibid, vi, 292.
[6] Ibid., vi, 499; v, 658 sq.

side; and the most emphatic assertions of this, moreover, were made in the closing years of his life. As to the reality of the impartation, Luther sometimes speaks as though we, in our forms of Christian speech, should "impute, ascribe, attribute" these qualities, as though the "names" were combined in the one person; sometimes he asserts also that, with the two natures, their consequences and attributes themselves were combined—that, as God and man are combined and mingled in one person, so also are the attributes combined and mingled.[1] It is evidently meant, that it is only in view of the *actual union* of the attributes that the Scriptures authorize us thus to speak. With special reference to the impartation from the human to the divine, he employs again illustrations similar to those which he had used in the controversy with Zwingli,[2] as of the wounding of the entire person by the wounding of any member of his body, etc. He now says expressly, that the whole man is smitten in soul and body when his leg is smitten.[3] As in this case the whole man is, even with his soul, actually involved, so, evidently, would Luther conceive also, in the most real way possible, of the entire Christ, together with His divine nature, as concerned in the experiences of the human nature of the Saviour.

If we examine still more critically, we shall, indeed, observe that *the impartation is not even now represented as occurring equally in the two directions*. The human is still by no means transferred to the divine in the same sense in which Luther here again represents the divine as being transferred to the human. As to the transfer of the divine to the human, Luther constantly applies directly to the *human nature* the declarations of Scripture according to which Christ has received power over all things, inasmuch as Christ, according to His divine nature, has not received, but eternally possessed, such power. At the same time, he places the fact, that the man, the Son of Mary, has divine power, in the same category as the description of Him as the Creator of all things, although we cannot think of such a participation of the human nature in the work of creation as was that of the divine nature in the sufferings of Christ. But that which he describes as *received* from the human nature must have been a

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 310.

[2] Supra, p. 134.

[3] Erl. Ed., xlvi, 331.

peculiar property of the human nature itself;[1] and hence, when he speaks of the person, "Christ," or of the "Son of God," as being "set" over all things, he can do so only by using the language in a *communicative* sense, declaring of God and the divine nature that which is strictly true only of the human nature.[2] As to the transfer, conversely, of the human to the divine, it is to be observed that Luther does not assign human suffering to the divine nature in the same sense in which he ascribes the possession of power to the human nature. On the contrary, notwithstanding the importance which he attaches to the participation of the divine nature in the sufferings of Christ, we nowhere find the idea of a real participation insisted upon, nor even expressed in any way more definitely than in the general form already cited. We find, in fact, nothing more than the general representation, that the divine nature is present in the sufferings of the human—as a weighty element, by virtue of which the latter receive their eternal validity in the sight of God.[3] At all events, there is no room for the suspicion that the divine nature has, according to Luther, in consequence of the incarnation, in any way *laid aside* anything of its own distinctive character. He now employs, indeed, with reference to Phil. ii. 6 sq., the expression: "That the Lord descended from heaven, emptied Himself of His *divinity*, and became a man for our sakes";[4] and in the *Tischreden* he says, referring to the same passage, "Christ is God, but He determines not to be so, but to be our servant."[5] But, in view of all his other definite doctrinal statements upon this point, he can here have meant only what he had before described as an emptying Himself of the divine *form*. He had, for example, said[6] that Christ emptied Himself, according to Phil. ii., of His divine *glory*, and humbled Himself to a position beneath that of all men; that He, in reference to this, in John xiv. 28, calls Himself less than the Father; that the "going to the Father" spoken of in John xiv. indicates the kingdom to which He goes from His earthly house of servitude, in order to

[1] Cf., upon this point especially, Erl. Ed., xxxvii, 33.

[2] Op. Ex., xxiii, 469 sq. [3] Supra, p. 366. [4] Erl. Ed., iv, 4.

[5] Tischr., i, 376. Erl. Ed., lviii, 96. Those ancient editions of the *Tischreden*, in which the words "not, but" are wanting, have doubtless omitted them because they were thought to sound too harshly.

[6] Erl. Ed., xlix, 247.

publicly receive the divine power and glory which He has had with the Father from eternity. In a similar way, Luther applies the emptying Himself of the divine form to the sufferings of Christ, declaring that He did not *use* His divine power nor *manifest* (*eraügen*) His almighty strength, but "drew it in." [1]

Fixing our attention again particularly upon the *human nature* of Christ, we shall find Luther constantly speaking of the transfer to it of divine power, and that from the very moment "when God and man were united in one person." [2] Ordinarily, indeed, as we should not fail to note, he now, as before the sacramentarian controversy, applies the scriptural declarations concerning the exaltation of Christ simply to the Saviour as already ascended to heaven, in harmony with Ps. viii. 4–8 (compare also Heb. ii. 7, 8).[3] He even says directly: [4] "He began to sit there (at the right hand of God) after the ascension; His human nature had before not been seated there." But he elsewhere [5] says more definitely: Christ is here made Lord according to His human nature through *revelation* and *glorification* after His ascension; He was *glorified* (clearly and distinctly revealed for us) through the resurrection as Lord, that He might be also *for us* Lord over all things in heaven and on earth. According to this, the exaltation of Christ in His ascension appears (in harmony with the representation in Erl. Ed., xxxvii, 33), after all, to have been only a *revelation* of that which had been *previously* transferred to the human nature.

We no longer find expressions concerning the development of Jesus in His childhood in which the strictly human features are so distinctly recognized as in the passages already cited.[6] Luther now merely says that he "deported Himself as any other child" (following Phil. ii.: "being found in fashion," etc.), and that the Scriptures wish thus to depict Him as a true, natural man; [7] that He "conducted and deported (*gestellet und gebaret*) Himself like any other lad"; [8] that in the temple (Lk. ii. 46) He doubtless spoke with peculiar humility, and "conducted Himself

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxix, 48. [2] Ibid., xxvii, 33.
[3] Op. Ex., xxiii, 469, 472. Erl. Ed., xlvi, 329 sq.; xxxix, 55; xl, 49 sq.
[4] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 177. [5] Ibid., xxx, 19, 55; cf. also, xl, 49 sq.
[6] Ibid., x, 300 sq.; supra, p. 375 sq.
[7] Ibid., vi, 129. [8] Ibid., xlv, 384.

as though He had heard (what He knew) from His mother or other pious persons."[1] It is again said, according to Lk. ii. 52, that He increased in wisdom; but this is no longer so explained as at an earlier period.[2] How far, it may then be naturally asked, may we still understand the deportment (*Gebärden*) which Christ assumed as expressing actual and strictly human conditions of soul and spirit? We have seen that Luther previously applied the statements concerning the gradually increasing knowledge of Christ, and His own statement recorded in Mk. xiii. 32, to His human nature, and understood them in their natural sense, attributing, in so far, a degree of ignorance to Christ. At a later date, however, if the *Tischreden* is to be trusted, he found refuge from the difficulty in an explanation similar to that which he had previously rejected, *i. e.*, that Christ was, in the passage cited, speaking only of His office, not of His person.[3]

Yet, however much we may find in all this which to us may appear inconsistent with the preservation of the true human nature of Christ, Luther himself recognizes no such inconsistency, but, none the less, maintains most strenuously the position, that Christ is true man no less than true God. It is worthy of remark also that, in the period following the Zwinglian controversy, he at least refrained from any attempt to expand the thought of the further endowment of the human nature with the attributes of the divine; and, still further, that we no longer find his earlier emphatic and express assertions of the omnipresence of the body, involved though this still was in his general declarations concerning the human nature, made the subject of express and specific discussion in any of his writings. We may again recall also, in this connection, the way in which he commonly speaks of the exaltation of Christ, although, as previously remarked, we are not at liberty to construe this as indicating any change in his dogmatic views themselves. In commenting upon John iii. 13, he declares simply, without any reservation, that the descending of Christ, while He still, according to His divine nature, remained forever at the right hand of God, "occurred only according to His human nature"[4]—without at all asserting that His body had also been at the same time in heaven.[5] The greatest weight must,

[1] Erl. Ed., ii, 7. [2] Ibid., x, 300. [3] Tischr., i, 349.
[4] Erl. Ed., xlvi, 328, 330. [5] Cf. supra, p. 118.

finally, here be given to the utterances of Luther concerning the sufferings which Christ endured according to His human nature. He represents that the divine nature remains present with the human in the sufferings of the Saviour; that it is through the presence of the divine nature that the latter receive their proper value; and it is by virtue of it that Christ triumphs over death and hell. But the divine nature here, he declares, refrains from manifestation, withdraws within itself, lies concealed and quiet. Christ is forsaken of God and left without divine assistance. He hangs upon the cross as, simply and purely, a man in great weakness. In a similar way, it was as simply and purely a man, that He once endured temptation (Matt. iv.) at the hand of Satan.[1] In such connections, Luther habitually lays the chief stress directly upon the spiritual experiences of the man, Christ, in which He endured what any man must suffer when most sorely tempted and forsaken of God.

It would be in vain to search in the writings of Luther for any harmonizing suggestions or definitions designed to make more intelligible to us the true persistence of the two natures, especially that of the human nature, in their union in the one personality. He simply proclaims that which appears to him to be set forth in the Scriptures as the basis of our salvation. That which is thus set before his spiritual vision, he endeavors in his fundamental principles to combine in one view, yet avoiding all attempt to himself solve, or even to analyze more fully, the questions which are naturally thereby suggested to our minds. The characteristic peculiarity of his Christology, differentiating it from the previous doctrinal development in this direction, lies in its *profound and earnest attempt to secure full recognition of the doctrine of the union of the truly divine and truly human natures* —and, we may further add, especially in the peculiar stress which it lays upon the *human element* in this union. For, however the genuineness of the human nature may appear to be jeopardized in the above-cited passages, it would be a most egregious blunder to look for the fundamental characteristic and controlling principle of his Christology in any such idea as that he endeavored to give but a subordinate significance to the humanity of Christ, or make it but a vanishing element as compared with the divinity,

[1] Op. Ex., xxiii, 469. Erl. Ed., iii, 302, 397 sq.; xxxix, 45 sq., 47; ii, 136.

and thus merely followed to greater lengths a tendency already embodied in the preceding development of the doctrine. Upon the contrary, that very conception of the spiritual sufferings (*Seelenleiden*) of Christ, by which His true humanity is still, despite all that may seem to discredit it, most positively affirmed and emphasized, is quite specifically Lutheran, lying at the very heart of Luther's faith and theology. Even the most questionable of his utterances as to the omnipresence of the body, etc., are prompted not at all by indifference to the significance of the human side, but, on the contrary, as we long since had occasion to observe, by the earnest desire so to present the humanity itself in closest unity with the divinity, that the former may furnish a firm point of attachment for faith. Thus does Luther himself characterize his own knowledge of Christ, as contrasted with the theology of his predecessors: "This, says he, is what the most exalted theologians did in former times—they fled (flew) from the humanity of Christ to his divinity, and clung alone to this. I was also formerly such a doctor, and excluded the humanity. But we must ascend to the divinity, and hold fast to it, in such a way as not to abandon the humanity of Christ. Thou shouldst know nothing of any God, or Son of God, but Him who is declared to have been born of the Virgin Mary and to have become man." [1]

2. *The Work of Christ.*

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN AND GUILT—CONQUEST OF SIN—CHRIST'S PERFECT HOLINESS—SUBJECTION TO LAW—HUMAN GUILT BORNE—A CURSE IN SIGHT OF MAN AND GOD—UNDER WRATH OF GOD AND POWER OF DEVIL—INNOCENCE—RELATION OF DEVIL AND LAW TO CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS—RESULTS FOR US—PECULIARITY OF LUTHER'S DOCTRINE—VICARIOUS SUFFERING—"DESCENSUS AD INFEROS"—ASCENSION—TEACHING OF CHRIST—CHRIST AS PROPHET, PRIEST, KING.

Luther briefly designates as the "Office and Work of Jesus Christ," "OUR REDEMPTION" (*Erlösung*). This is a *deliverance from sin, death, hell and all misery*—from the entire state into which we have been brought by the sin of Adam. And Luther's foremost thought, when speaking of "deliverance from sin," is

[1] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 362.

always, as we long since observed, that the curse of sin, the guilt and consciousness of guilt, the sense of the divine wrath, are taken from us. That with this there was already really associated in his mind a conquest of the power of sin and its impulses, we shall very clearly recognize in the course of our investigations in the present section, and, especially, in the sections following, in which the doctrine of justification will claim our attention. None the less marked, however, on this account is the precedence given to the first-named element when the state of sin is under consideration. Thus Luther says, when speaking of the "bondage of sin," that it makes a timid conscience; but it becomes powerless through Christ to such an extent that it can no longer bring charges against us. The deliverance wrought by Christ is, according to Eph. i. 7, essentially the "forgiveness of sins." The most terrible thing about sin is that it involves the eternal wrath of God, and, in addition, the whole kingdom of Satan.[1]

To this Work of Christ belongs His entire continuous exertion of energy upon our souls through His Spirit. In the present section we shall have to do more particularly with the work which He accomplished once for all in His career as the Incarnate One from His birth to His ascension, especially His sufferings, death and resurrection. The continuous activity of the Saviour, based upon this, will claim our attention in the following chapter.

Luther's testimony upon this subject is *exceedingly abundant and vivid*. What the God-man in the work of redemption undertook, endured and accomplished, he seeks to present to us in every light as impressively as possible, and he endeavors to set it before us in the most attractive and picturesque outlines. Yet we find him presenting, now one, now another, feature of the subject, just as the immediate occasion may suggest, and, particularly, as his mind is influenced from time to time by the passages of Scripture which he may be seeking to elucidate. Thus, greater prominence is given at different times to the relation of the work of Christ to the sinful state of man in general, to the wrath of God before which the conscience trembles, to the devil, or to the Law—and to the latter, either as visiting its curse upon us or as standng over us, in consequence of the general prevalence of sin, as an oppressor and taskmaster. Similarly, in the work of

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 115; xxi, 13, 99; xli, 214; xlix, 140; x, 24; xviii, 177, 179; ix, 380. Comm. ad. Gal., i, 54.

Christ itself, the chief emphasis is laid from time to time upon His active ministry, upon His sufferings, upon His death, or upon His triumph in the resurrection, etc. Nowhere has Luther, in uniform statement, combined, expanded, or harmonized all these various elements. This may be partly accounted for by the fact, that, however peculiar to himself, in contrast with the traditional theology, was his conception of the work of Christ, it was yet not that work itself, but only the significance to be attributed to it in contrast with all human efforts, which he found it necessary, in the conflict with his enemies, to maintain and more carefully define. He himself, moreover, reminds us that strong meat cannot be furnished to all readers, but that some can endure only milk; and he speaks of this especially with reference to the mysterious culmination of religious truth in the sufferings of the Saviour.[1] Hence, when we find him dwelling less fully upon this subject than is his wont, we are by no means at liberty to conclude that he has come to attach less importance to it, or that he has formed another conception of its significance. In his picturesque representations, it may at times be questioned to what extent he wishes his language to be understood literally or figuratively. It will aid us in reaching a conclusion in such cases to note in advance what he himself declared with primary reference to the descent of Christ to hell, but yet, at the same time, in general terms: "We must at any rate conceive of *all* things which we cannot understand and know in pictures, even though they may not actually be just as the pictures represent them. I propose to keep close to the pictures, for with lofty thoughts and keen questions the devil would easily draw me off of the track. The picture really helps to gain the proper and correct understanding." [2]

It will now be our task to set in a clear light, as far as possible, the significance of the separate elements of the work of Christ in their relation to one another, as conceived by Luther, acknowledging, as we proceed, the points in which the utterances of the Reformer himself fail to afford us such further mediating suggestions or definitions as may seem to be desirable.[3]

[1] Op. Ex., xvi, 242, 248 sq. [2] Erl. Ed., iii, 286.

[3] Held, in his "De opere Jesu Christi salutari," A. D. 1860, has presented the doctrine very fully and vividly, but without bringing to view with sufficiennt accuracy the dogmatic questions which must, even in the interest of mere historic fidelity, be considered in connection with it.

The fundamental prerequisite for the entire activity of Christ in the interest of human salvation—for His once-for-all completed work, and His continuous bestowal of salvation upon men—was always, for Luther, found in the *Person of the Redeemer, with His Divine and Human Nature.*

The character of *holiness* belongs to Him by virtue of His very nature: He is pure already in His conception and birth. And as His purity and holiness, in general, are to redound to our benefit, in order that we also, in our faith in Him and through union with Him,[1] may become holy, or righteous, before God, so also is this purity of His birth to prove a source of blessing to us.[2] But, in order that salvation may actually flow out from Him upon us, He, the Son of God, holy in His own nature, also, for our sakes put His own holiness, as a man, to the test throughout His entire earthly career in active moral living, and in His sufferings took upon Himself, endured and overcame that which rested as a heavy burden upon us, sinful men. We must, as when before treating of the subject,[3] fix our attention at once upon both these features of His work.

Christ brings deliverance, because He, holy as He was from His very birth, never sinned, but, on the contrary, in perfect obedience, fulfilled the Father's will. In view of this, His *obedience*, His *piety*, His *holiness*, we may be certain that God will for His sake be gracious to us. Therein He *fulfilled the Law*, or the "will of God" (Ps. xl. 7, 8). Through His cheerful fulfilling of this divine will, we are sanctified (Heb. x. 10), and through His obedience, righteous (Rom. v. 19). He has satisfied the Law, so that we, who were incapable of meeting its demands, are now no longer condemned by it. He fulfilled the Law, moreover, completely, because all His deeds were done in that love to God and His fellowmen in which the whole Law consists. Here come into view, also, especially His sufferings and death, and His bearing of our sins; for these were prompted by love and obedience to the Father, and by love for His fellowmen. He thus fulfilled also the requirement of Matt. vii. 12; for every one would gladly have another do for him as Christ did for others. Thus has He entirely fulfilled the Law which we were in duty

[1] Cf. the following chapter and Vol. I., p. 414; Vol. II., p. 366 sq.

[2] Erl. Ed., xx, 160 sqq.

[3] Vol. I., p. 170.

bound to fulfil. If we be now asked in the presence of God, whether we have loved God and perfectly fulfilled the Law, He approaches and says: "O, Father, thou knowest I have done so; let this be set to their credit (*ihnen zu Gute kommen*), because they believe on me."[1] We have here a dogmatic presentation of the *active obedience* of Christ in our stead, in which His *endurance* for us is also included as a moral act. Precisely what He took upon Himself in this endurance, and why it was necessary for Him so to do, are matters which will demand our attention in another connection.

If we inquire more closely into the *nature of the Law which Christ is said to have fulfilled*, we are at once led, in Luther, from the thought of a *doing* of the Law by Christ to that of a *bearing* of it on His part—from the doing of that which we ought to have done, yet, on account of indwelling sin, could not have done, to a bearing of that which was laid upon us in our character as sinners. It is only from this point of view that we can rightly understand the often-quoted saying of Luther, that *Christ in His person and His will was not under the Law, but free from it and Lord over all.*[2] What was, then, the nature of the Law under which Christ placed Himself? To it belong certainly the Mosaic ordinances, to which He is particularly said to have subjected Himself. To it belong also such commandments as that requiring obedience to parents, and, in general, all the commandments which are not purely ceremonial—the whole Law, including that written upon the hearts of all men. We have already been told that the will of the Father is the same thing as the Law.[3] But when it is now said of Christ, that He is free from the Law, we dare not understand this in the sense in which Luther, in his well-known utterance of A. D. 1525, declares of God, as such, that we dare set no bounds to Him, etc.;[4] but Luther has in view a freedom from the Law which may and should be transferred from the Son of God to us men. According to this, the

[1] Erl. Ed., xxvii, 183 (Vol. I., p. 414); iii, 311, 313 sq. Jena, i, 542 b. Briefe, v, 525. Erl. Ed., xlvi, 67; xv, 57; ii, 261; x, 25; xiv, 10, 16, 154.

[2] Ibid., vii, 270 sq.

[3] Ibid., vii, 270, i, 307 sq., 309; xv, 261. Op. Ex., xvi, 244. Erl. Ed., xiv, 10.

[4] Ibid., xlviii, 53.

kind of Law which is here meant may be yet more narrowly defined. Believers, delivered by Christ, although living under the Law, are yet not subject to it. Christ, by the very act of subjecting Himself to the Law, has made them free from it. And by this is meant, not only that they are free from the curse of the Law, so that it can no more bring charges against them and condemn them, but that they now, being redeemed (delivered), no longer have in the Law a taskmaster, with threatenings and rewards. They now have themselves a free and cheerful will, and do all things in a natural way, as did Adam and Eve before the Fall; and hence the Law has no further demands to make upon them. If they still have evil inclinations, yet the Law can no more threaten them, inasmuch as they look to Christ in faith, and His fulfilment of the Law is theirs. Just as little do they need to earn anything by the works of the Law, since they already certainly possess all blessedness in Christ. Now it is just the perfect pattern and original source of this liberty which, upon Luther's theory, is to be found in Christ. He has no Law and is above all Law, because He has of His own accord done all that the entire Law requires, so that it can neither command nor forbid Him to do anything—and because He is so full of all that is good that He can neither desire nor do anything but that which is good. He has in His person more righteousness, piety, holy desire and love than the Law could ever demand. Hence, the Law has no authority over Him. It cannot say to Him: "Do this, avoid that"; but He might, on the contrary, say to the Law: "I do, and have done, what should be done; and I have no need whatever of your requirements to that end." Thus He stands far above the Law, and is Lord of the Law. Nor was it necessary for Him, before attaining this liberty, to merit anything by means of His work upon our behalf or by His obedience to the Father. He might have remained in heaven and been equal to God, and, from the very moment of His conception, all things belonged to Him; but He accomplished His great work for our benefit in free love and obedience.[1] According to these principles, when Luther speaks of the subjection of Christ to the Law, *from which He was free*, he does not understand by the latter

[1] Erl. Ed., xv, 294; vii, 266 sqq., 296; li, 288, 297; xiv, 155; xv, 259 sqq. Jena, i, 237 (Löscher ii, 886). Erl. Ed., xiv, 10.

simply the "will of God," but the divine will as presented in exernal commandments and prohibitions, with threatenings and promises of reward. He speaks, at the same time, of a doing of the divine loving will, as Jesus freely cherished it in His own heart; but he does not say that Jesus had also liberty from, and dominion over, the latter. He means, in the former case, the Law as it stands before us since we have become sinners, and as it is specially portrayed in the Mosaic requirements. "The Law," says he, "has to do only with sinners. But Christ is no sinner; He is verily the Lord of the Law, because He is without any sin."[1] But Christ retained His liberty, also, even when under the Law. In outward works, He was, indeed, like all those who do the latter unwillingly, ensnared as they are in the two fetters of the prison-house of the Law, *i. e.*, the fear, or threatenings, of the Law, and the reward, or hope of reward. But in His will He was free; He kept the Law voluntarily, neither seeking nor for Himself fearing anything from it. And it is just to such a liberty that He now desires to lead us out from the prison of the Law, into which He has come to find us.[2]

If we have correctly apprehended the conception of Luther, a discrimination must be made, in the positive activity of Christ of which we have been speaking, between two things which he himself, indeed, does not clearly differentiate, and which coincide in the actual deeds of the Saviour, *i. e.*, the *holiness* of His entire character and life, and His *subjection* to the requirements of the Law, in which this holy obedience to the Father was consummated. The second item, however, has already to do with something which, as the *punitive consequence* of sin, lay upon us, and was now taken upon Himself by the Redeemer. The active obedience thus here already assumes the form of an enduring, or suffering. Thus, too, Luther is accustomed to combine directly with the subjection of Christ to the Law also His further subjection to its curse, or to the penalty which it threatens to inflict upon those who violate it. Christ has taken both upon Himself for us—has done the works of the Law, which He was not bound to do, and has willingly endured the punishment and penalty of the Law.[3] In a similar way, Luther commonly embraces both ideas in his conception of our redemption, *i. e.*, deliverance from

[1] Erl. Ed., i, 308. [2] Ibid., vii, 270. [3] Ibid., 271.

the Law as a taskmaster, and from its curse, which was already resting upon us. In this view, Christ stands before us as Lord of the Law, because, while He Himself offers to become a curse for us, the Law has yet no authority to *condemn* Him.[1]

But this opens up for us a train of thought which must now be considered in its wider connections.

It is not really the active work of Christ in itself which has redemptive power for us, but *His taking upon Himself of that which we had as sinners to bear*. It is this specifically which Luther means when he says of Christ, that He took upon Himself (*assumpsit*) that which was ours. And he gives the place of prominence to this feature of the work of Christ in precisely the same way in which he, when speaking of the redemption achieved by that work, lays the chief stress upon our deliverance from that which we had, as sinners, to bear.

Christ, says Luther, *took upon Himself that which was ours*, our sin, in order to remove it from us, and to bestow upon us His own holiness and righteousness. Yea, in order to become the Saviour of all men, He thus took upon Himself the sins of all—mine, and thine, and those of the whole world. This cannot be strongly enough expressed. Christ is said to be the greatest sinner, murderer, blasphemer, etc. He is even to be called, with emphasis, "sin" itself (2 Cor. v. 21).[2] He *has sin*, is a *sinner*, is *made to be sin for us*—never by any means in the sense of having Himself committed sin, but because He has taken upon Himself and bears all sins, is a sacrifice for them, and, in bearing, renders satisfaction for them.[3] To express the idea of Luther, we are accustomed to say that Christ has borne the guilt of our sins. Luther has no liking whatever for the unbiblical term, "*reatus*."[4] He is accustomed, however, to mention, in immediate connection with sin, that which it, as an offence (*Verschuldung*) against God, brings upon us, *i. e.*, the *wrath of God*.[5] Christ, in assuming sin, took also this upon Himself. Yet he occasionally, in scattered passages, employs also directly such expressions as: that Christ has been made the "*reus*" (one accused) of all sins; that upon Him, the innocent, fell "the guilt, or penalty."[6]

[1] Erl. Ed., xv, 264; vi, 155 sq. [2] Cf. supra, p. 353.
[3] Erl. Ed., xviii, 177 sq. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 14, 19 sqq., 31.
[4] Cf. Jena, ii, 427. [5] Comm. ad Gal., iii, 54.
[6] Ibid., ii, 17, 19, 32. Erl. Ed., xii, 426.

The atoning work of Christ is completed in His sacrificial death. But it begins already with His incarnation. It was for this purpose that He derived His body from such polluted flesh :[1] "He must, in His flesh, become a sinner, just as loathsome as He can possibly become."[2] He no doubt endured from His very youth, especially in the night-time, many assaults of temptation from the devil—terrors driving almost to despair, so that His life was on the brink of hell (Ps. lxxxviii. 15, 3),[3] all of which culminated finally in Gethsemane and upon Calvary. He appears also, particularly at His baptism, as the greatest sinner of the whole world, His purpose being to secure forgiveness for the sins of the world, which He has assumed.[4]

Finally, He endured to the utmost, according to Luther, in His last sufferings and death, that which would have fallen upon us sinners. Luther depicts most impressively the *external sufferings* which He was called upon to endure at the hands of men, as they treated Him as the worst of sinners. But it was not, in his view, the bodily sufferings, nor the sense of rejection by all men, which constituted the chief agony of the Saviour; but the latter consisted in the feeling of that which sinners themselves must feel, and which God causes them to feel, when under *conviction of sin*. This had been his conception from the very beginning.[5] Thus it is that the sins of men are laid upon Christ, as taught in Isa. liii. It is His person that speaks in the laments of Ps. xl. 12; xli. 4; lxix. 5; lxxxviii. 7, 16.[6]

Over the sinner hangs the Law, with its *sentence of condemnation and its curse*. Christ takes this sentence upon Himself, and endures the curse and its visitation, just as though He had Himself broken the Law. He has, according to Gal. iii. 10 and Deut. xxi. 23,[7] been fully made a curse for us. He exposed Himself to the wrath of the Law.[8] Many of the utterances of Luther upon this subject leave room for the inquiry, whether he does not, after all, regard Christ as resting under the curse of

[1] Supra, p. 371.
[2] Op. Ex., ix, 173 sqq.
[3] Erl. Ed., iii, 48 sq.
[4] Ibid., xvi, 113 sq.; xix, 65.
[5] Vol. I, p. 105 sq., 171 sq.
[6] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 16, 35. Erl. Ed., xix, 66.
[7] Erl. Ed., vii, 271 sq., iii, 136 sqq. [8] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 12 sqq.
[8] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 86.

the Law only in the sense of being treated by the Jews and their rulers, the representatives of the Law, as worthy of condemnation, and being hung upon the cross as one accursed (Deut. xxi.). Luther does actually, when commenting, for example, upon Isa. liii. 8, speak of the sentence which was, in the name of the Law and of divine authority, pronounced upon Jesus by the Jews, because He made Himself the Son of God.[1] The declaration, that the Law condemned Jesus and proclaimed Him accursed, he speaks of[2] as equivalent to saying that the *Jews* cried out that, according to the Law, Jesus must die. He further remarks, incidentally, when commenting upon John ii. 17, that, as the disciples applied the passage, Ps. lxix. 9, specially to Christ, although at the same time understanding it as applicable to all good teachers, so Paul also, in Gal. iii., applies the declaration of Deut. xxi. alone to Christ, although the latter was not spoken of Christ, who did not die as a criminal and one accursed. He adds the remark, that it may have happened in other cases also that pious persons were crucified with the guilty, but the former were not on that account accursed.[3] Nevertheless, it would be a great perversion were we to attempt, in consequence of such statements, to restrict the significance of the curse which Luther says Christ became for us to the outward condition in which He was placed by the Jews. The very statements of the passage last cited, and its context, carry us beyond such a limitation; for it is there expressly said that Christ became a curse *in the sight of God*, and that He, without dying as a criminal, yet undertook to bear the curse for us; and hence Paul speaks correctly, although the declaration of Moses, in its original and general signification, did not have reference to Christ. But Luther calls attention to the fact that "the persons were dissimilar," *i. e.*, Christ was in his personal character without criminality or unworthiness. We may compare his declaration made elsewhere:[4] "Christ is innocent, in the view of this general Law, *in His own person*—He is a criminal, in view of this general Law, since He was made a curse *for us*." Luther even declares that, since Christ "stepped into our place and offered to pay (the penalty) for us," He suffered justly (*es geschehe ihm recht*), in the sense that, having made

[1] Op. Ex., xxiii, 298 sq.
[2] Erl. Ed., iv, 10.
[3] Ibid, xlvi, 190 sq.
[4] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 32.

Himself the Son of God, He must pay the penalty of death affixed to blasphemy. We men, like Adam himself, all want to make ourselves sons of God, and to be God: Christ, standing in our place and making such claim, must also pay the appropriate penalty.[1] Hence, although the Jews wrongfully punished and cursed Him as having personally committed blasphemy, He was, as the bearer of our sin, punished and made a curse by the divine Law itself. And to understand fully the significance of this, we must observe what it is precisely which is said to have been brought upon Jesus by the Law and its curse. The veritable terrors of the Law, with its awful maledictions, rolled upon His inmost soul. He was fearfully alarmed by the Law, and experienced such great agony as no man on earth had ever known before, until forced to cry out: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" These were the terrors to which we, as sinners, are liable.[2] It appears from Gal. iii., Luther declares, that hell itself and the wrath of God there laid hold upon Him.[3]

It was, therefore, the *wrath of God Himself* which Christ endured when He bore the curse of the Law upon our sins then resting upon Him. It was the eternal wrath of God, merited by our sins. Yea, it is only here that I can properly see and realize that wrath of God which the Law, in other ways and in weaker manifestations, attests.[4] It is *punishment* which God here suffers to come upon Him; for God has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. liii. 6). "We dare not emasculate these words, for God is not jesting in the words of the prophet." The Lamb of God bears our sins, and bearing is rightly interpreted as being punished. He is punished just because He has assumed and bears our sins.[5] Sin and the wrath of God were the cause of His death, just as death, in the first instance, came by sin.[6] His death was "a death from sin (*Sündentod*) and a death of (due to) the wrath of God."[7] Thus, the inner sufferings, or agony, of Jesus, in comparison with which the agony and fear of all other men

[1] Erl. Ed., l, 362 sqq.

[2] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 155, 153.

[3] Erl. Ed., xviii, 4.

[4] Ibid., xii, 422; xxxii, 8; iii, 137; xi, 29; xii, 172. Comm. ad Gal., i, 54; ii, 21, 35.

[5] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 16. Erl. Ed., iii, 270; xii, 426.

[6] Cf. supra, p. 358.

[7] Erl. Ed., xiv, 119; iii, 22 sq.

are but trifling experiences, was, in particular, a consciousness of this divine wrath. Thence came the terror which preceded His death.[1] Luther very frequently describes the condition into which Christ was then brought as an *abandonment by God*, following Matt. xxvii. 46 and Ps. xxii. 1. Here, again, he regards as the chief thing the experience in the soul of Jesus. He describes this with peculiar vividness in the *Operationes in Psalmos* (A. D. 1521) under Ps. xxii,[2] and his later utterances are in perfect harmony with the views there expressed. He himself, in his *Exposition of the Psalms of A. D. 1530*, refers to the earlier commentary with the confession that no human heart is capable, indeed, of entirely comprehending such a divine abandonment.[3] God, says he,[4] is life, light, wisdom, righteousness, mercy, power, peace, salvation, and everything that is good. To be abandoned by God is to be in death, darkness, folly, sin, weakness, distress, despair, and eternal condemnation. This is the crowning suffering (*summa passio*) of Christ. God "permits Christ to rest under (stick fast in) guilt, sin, folly, etc., in order that He may be left in the hand of the devil." In His heart and conscience Christ there suffered as do we sinners. As God punishes sinners not only with death, but with the terrors of an alarmed conscience, which feels the eternal wrath of God and seems to itself to have been forever cast away from His presence, so Christ suffered the terrors of a conscience alarmed and tasting the eternal wrath of God. It was necessary for Him to experience for us in His innocent, tender heart eternal death and condemnation, and to endure, in short, everything which a lost sinner has merited and must eternally suffer.[5] This is truth, and dare not be diluted nor emasculated by human levity.[6] God assumed toward Him the attitude of an enemy, with whom He was obliged to struggle, striking not at His outward nature (skin), but striking so deeply that the very marrow of His bones grew faint; for when God thus contends with man, there can be for him nothing but unrest and the agony of hell.[7] These sufferings prove clearly that He

[1] Erl. Ed., iii, 23, 25, 202. [2] Op. Ex., xvi.
[3] Ibid., xvii, 182. Erl. Ed., xxxviii, 217.
[4] Op. Ex., xvi, 244 sqq. Cf. xvii, 182.
[5] Op. Ex., xvi, l. c.; iii, 283; xvii, 76; xxxiii, 488. Erl. Ed., xxxix, 47 sq.
[6] Op. Ex., xvi, 248. [7] Erl. Ed., xxxiv, 206.

was enduring the hatred of God.[1] To this inward agony the human enemies of Jesus contributed by their mocking cries (Matt. xxvii. 42 sq.), and especially by the taunt: "If He hath pleasure in Him" (Ps. xxii. 8). They thus increased the agony and spiritual distress which He felt in the presence of the God who was forsaking and even hating Him. Their words were fiery darts of the Wicked One (Eph. vi. 16), which pierced Him to the heart.[2] After all the above, it is evident that the clear and constantly-recurring declarations of Luther, in regard to the inner, spiritual sufferings of Jesus, dare not be explained away simply because, in a single passage of his earlier writings,[3] he remarks that Christ was not, as are we, accursed and become sin itself in both body and spirit, but only in His body.[4] We can easily understand, also, how he could at one time describe the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane as the greatest which He was called upon to bear, inasmuch as He there already endured the agony of soul which was so much greater than the physical suffering, and could yet, at another time, describe in the same way the sufferings upon the cross, inasmuch as Christ in the garden still enjoyed the consoling ministrations of an angel. Upon both occasions, the greatest suffering was that of the soul in its sense of abandonment by God.[5]

In being forsaken of God, finally, Jesus was, as we have seen, left *in the hand of the devil*. The latter not only prepared for Him the tortures to be endured at the hands of men, and brought Him to the cross,[6] but he assailed Him with peculiar malignity in the very tortures of soul of which we have been speaking. Inasmuch as Jesus no longer received, as before, consolation directly from God, the devil gains an opportunity to assail Him more severely than before.[7] He presses into His heart the fiery dart, that He is resting under the displeasure of God.[8] He grinds his teeth at the prospect of devouring the innocent Lamb, so that the guileless man is forced to tremble and quail like a lost sinner.[9]

[1] Op. Ex., xxiii, 489. [2] Op. Ex., xvi, 270 sq.
[3] Comm. ad Gal., iii, 313 (A. D., 1519).
[4] The earlier commentary upon Galatians does not so fully as the latter develop the general idea of the curse which rested upon Christ.
[5] Op. Ex., x, 218 sq. Erl. Ed., xvii, 76; xviii, 11. [6] Erl. Ed., iii, 100.
[7] Ibid., iii, 197. [8] Ibid., 201. [9] Ibid., xxxix, 48.

Christ thus experienced *hell itself*. There was in Him the sensation of an actually present hell, a feeling of hellish fire. Forsaken of God, He was for a time in hell.[1] By "hell" is not here meant the place of the departed, as Christ suffered the torments in question, not in a place of the dead, but while in the flesh. He may rather be said to have here in the flesh suffered the punishment of Gehenna, *i. e.*, of hellish fire, for the ungodly. "*Sensit poenam infernalem.*"[2]

As to the relation of this experience of Jesus to His nature, we must recall that feature of Luther's doctrine of the person of Christ which acknowledges the possibility of a withdrawal of the divinity within itself. Luther appeals also, on the one hand, to the human nature which Jesus had assumed, as being a nature mortal and subject to the wrath of God, and to the weakness of the flesh, which He had in common with us, although without sin—a nature whose natural inclinations would have preferred pleasure to suffering, and which even struggled against His willing spirit—and, on the other hand, to the purity, soundness, and delicacy of His innocent human nature, which, on account of these characteristics, must have felt all the more deeply that which was so contrary to its own nature.[3]

Yet we must, despite all that has been said, constantly reaffirm, with Luther, that there was in the experience of Christ *no guilt nor curse* in the proper sense of these terms. Nor was He really rejected or abandoned by God, as one who is on account of his own sin rejected and accursed. In regard to the curse, Luther can even say: According to the *outward appearance* it *seemed* as though Christ were accursed.[4] Yet he does not, on this account, detract in the least from what he has said as to the actual *bearing* of the curse in our stead. In the very passage in question, for example, he proceeds to say: But, according to the spirit (as contrasted with the "outward appearance"), Christ bears the pains of us all—is punished for us. We must particularly observe, further, that Luther does not mean us to understand

[1] Op. Ex., xvi, 244 sq., 259. Erl. Ed., xxxix, 48; xviii, 7; cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 105 sq.

[2] Op. Ex., x, 219; xxiii, 488.

[3] Erl. Ed., xlvi, 14. Op. Ex., iii, 238; xv, 370; xvii, 122. Erl. Ed., iii, 199. Op. Ex., xvi, 245 sq.; xxiii, 488.

[4] Erl. Ed., iii, 270. Cf. the passage above cited, Erl. Ed., xlvi, 190 sq.

the "abandonment" of Christ as implying that God was actually far away, or alienated, from the suffering Saviour; nor His "wrath" as indicating that He was actually personally angry with Christ. He would have us conceive the state of divine abandonment as analogous to the conditions of spiritual distress into which other pious persons are permitted to fall. In fact, the association of Jesus with other similarly-afflicted pious persons in this trying experience is a marked characteristic of Luther's view of it. The personal sense of suffering is, for him, in both instances the same, however the cases may differ in degree and in the immediate cause of the infliction. Thus, he describes the sufferings which true believers must yet endure through spiritual temptations as a repetition in their experience of the sufferings of Jesus in His abandonment by God. They are, he affirms, but slight as compared with those of the Saviour, and, in view of His triumph over the latter, they cannot now harm His true followers. The chief example of such a condition presented in the Old Testament he finds in the sufferings of Job. He cites, also, the instance of Jacob's wrestling with God.[1] In all such cases, the "abandoned" or "forsaken" one is far from salvation and from God, in the sense of no longer experiencing anything of the grace and power of God, but realizing, on the contrary, in his conscience, the divine wrath; yet, at the same time, the salvation of God and divine assistance are really very near to him, and the God who is felt to be hostile and angry is, and remains, in fact, pure goodness and mercy.[2] The former condition is, in the case of Christ, revealed in His cry: "Thou hast forsaken me"; the latter, in the form of address: "My God." He could not have said, "My God," if He had been totally abandoned; and the words constitute an acknowledgment that He was, after all, not forsaken. Thus there remained also to Christ, although He as a natural man so quailed beneath His sufferings, His divine power, by virtue of which He surrendered Himself to the will of God and came off conqueror in the awful trial, whereas any creature must have perished under the burden of a single sin. Christ was, in reality, according to Luther, not only at the same time supremely righteous and supremely sinful, but, similarly also,

[1] Cf. Op. Ex., xvi, 243, 250 sq., 271, 253; iii, 283; xxiii, 489. Erl. Ed., xxxix, 45 sqq.; xxxiv, 206 sq.; ix, 91. Supra, p. 238.

[2] Op. Ex., xvi, 250 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxiv, 207.

in the midst of supreme despair supremely triumphant, and in the midst of supreme condemnation supremely blessed. Yet Luther always maintains that, *in His own feeling*, Jesus endured the entire punishment. The entire context shows that he does not mean to attribute to Him any *feeling* of blessedness. Even the confession that He is after all not abandoned, expressed in His outcry upon the cross, must be interpreted as the struggling utterance of a heart which yet, in its actual feeling, experiences nothing but midnight darkness and wrath.[1] Nor are we to modify our conception of the "hellish" pains which He endured, because the latter are attributed also to other pious persons in spiritual distress. On the contrary, we do not rightly understand the sufferings of such afflicted saints until we recognize that they experience therein a foretaste of hell—are in hell.[2] Christ thus remains ever distinguished from the condemned sinners whose penalty of suffering He bears, by the relation in which God stands to Him, and that which He, independently of His personal feeling, still really maintains toward God. Moreover, the feeling in question is but transitory. Yet, in its vivid intensity, it is still, as we have seen, a sense of "eternal" wrath, in which the Saviour experienced "the never-ending wrath of the eternal God," and "eternal and irremissible punishment."[3]

Christ had, accordingly, to endure in His sufferings and death the wrath of God, the assaults of the devil, the curse of the Law, the burden and the punishment of sin. We must yet consider more carefully the relation of these various elements of His sufferings to one another, or the relation of those having other than divine origin to God. It is an essential feature of Luther's presentation of the subject, that, while representing the entire sufferings of Christ, on the one hand, as ordained by God, he yet, at the same time, uniformly describes that which was inflicted upon the Saviour from other sources as gross injustice, or *wrong;* and that he then holds it to have been in consequence of this wrong perpetrated upon Christ that its authors have been condemned, removed, and have lost their power over us.

It is not difficult to understand the position which Luther here

[1] Op. Ex., xvi, 242 sq., 250. Erl. Ed., iii, 24, 29.

[2] Op. Ex., xvii, 52, 57. Cf. the infernales poenas, spoken of in Vol. I., p. 58.

[3] Op. Ex., xiv, 319; xvi, 59.

ascribes to the *devil*. The latter must always, as we have already learned,[1] even in the evil deeds which he performs in connection with his own will and character, serve the purposes and ways of God. He has received *authority* from God Himself to be the executioner of sinful men; but, in slaying Christ, he acts, as far as possible to him, in direct contravention of the authority given him, since he does it wantonly, as though Christ Himself had committed sin.[2] Nevertheless, Luther can still describe the sufferings and death of Christ, and thus also that which the devil visited upon Him, as accomplished in accordance with divine justice;[3] for *God* does not here deal wantonly with the innocent, but acts in full view of the fact that Christ had taken our guilt and punishment upon Himself. It is, therefore, certainly in accord with Luther's view to say that the devil, even when seeking with all his power to destroy Christ, was serving God and divine justice.

The relation of the *Law* to the sufferings of Christ appears more difficult to comprehend. How are we to understand the declarations, that the Law has done wrong, and committed a crime, in the exercise upon Him, its Lord, of the authority given to be exercised only upon sinners—that it runs off in company with death and the devil, etc.?[4] Is not the Law, according to Luther, directly from God? And is not God alone, in this feature of the transaction, the agent? Was it not He who allowed Christ to place Himself under the Law? Is it not He Himself who, by the withdrawal of His grace, causes Christ to feel the curse of the Law? Is it not God's own Law that ordained that, "since Christ was, as He Himself desired, to be made a curse for us, no other death would be suitable for Him than that upon the tree, which the Word of God had declared to be an accursed death"?[5] We cannot solve the difficulty by supposing that Luther has here in view, not the Law itself, but the Jews, who made a criminal use of the Law; for, although, in the writings of Luther, the ideas of the atrocity of the Law and that of those who apply it do occasionally coalesce, yet, in the case under con-

[1] Cf., supra, pp. 290 sqq., 335.

[2] Erl. Ed., xviii, 90.

[3] Ibid., l, 362; supra, p. 397.

[4] Ibid., xv, 261 sqq.; i, 310; iv, 10; x, 310 sq.; li, 271 sqq. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 151 sqq.

[5] Erl. Ed., iii, 139.

sideration, he usually speaks directly of an action of the Law itself, and only thus could he find in such action the ground upon which the Law itself is condemned. We must rather conclude that, in his exceedingly plastic presentation of the subject, he here conceives of the Law, with its power to kill and curse, as an entity separately existing and acting, and, leaving out of view entirely its connection with the will of God Himself, personifies it independently. He could the more easily be led to such a conception, since killing and condemning are at any rate, in his view, only the "strange work" of God. The Law, thus considered, like the devil himself, fell upon the innocent One, without regard for His innocence, and in order to destroy Him utterly as a sinner—whereas God Himself, who permitted the assault, dealt in the matter only in the way and with the purpose already indicated. Luther speaks also, in precisely the same way, of the assaults of the Law and death upon believers, declaring that they, though no longer having any right to do so, assail the conscience of the redeemed child of God, but must flee from the latter in shame and terror when He reminds them of the wrong which they have perpetrated upon Christ.[1] Luther speaks thus, although at the same time teaching us to regard the assaults of the Law upon Christian believers as a divine visitation. It is evident that, in speaking thus with regard to the experiences either of Christ Himself or of His followers, he does not use the word "Law" literally, although it is certain that he would have us understand in the most literal sense what is declared, in precisely the same terms, of the devil. The latter is, for him, a real person, as the Law, of course, is not. We find a similar form of personification in the statements concerning the wrong perpetrated by death in slaying Jesus, and by sin in condemning Him.[2]

We have thus far considered, in a general may, the *holy obedience* of Christ, the benefit of which we are to enjoy, and our *sufferings*, which Christ took upon Himself. The question now meets us: *In how far has deliverance by these means been accomplished for us?* The deliverance is chiefly, as we have seen, from guilt, punishment and wrath. In how far can we, upon the ground of the work of Christ as above described, be freed from these? Luther speaks very frequently of a *payment* which Christ

[1] Erl. Ed., x, 311. [2] Ibid., x, 310; xii, 426; xv, 332.

has thus made for our sins; and this he represents, further, as a payment made in accordance with the requirements of divine justice, or as a *satisfaction rendered to the divine righteousness*.[1] The forgiveness of sins, he explains, does not consist entirely and only in the divine imputation, *i. e.*, in the simple non-imputing of sin, as though the sufferings of Christ for sinners had been an unnecessary labor, and God had in them carried on a mere sham battle, whereas He could have forgiven sins had Christ not thus suffered; but God would not perform the act of non-imputation "unless satisfaction should first, by all means and superabundantly, be rendered to His Law and His righteousness." This was done, because it was for us an impossible task, by Christ, who was appointed to take our place. It was accomplished, moreover, according to Luther, by a two-fold process, *i. e.*, by Christ's taking upon Himself in His sufferings all our punishment, and by His fulfilling of the Law in our behalf. It is the former of these methods, however, which Luther chiefly emphasizes when speaking of the satisfaction rendered by Christ. What Christ did in this capacity is represented as having such efficacy by virtue of His nature and person: "There must here be a payment of sin as great as is God Himself, who has been offended by sin." Luther names also, in connection with the justice of God, His "honor." In demanding that satisfaction be rendered for sin, "God would have His honor and justice recompensed (paid)." Thus Christ took upon Himself the wrath of God, who, as the eternal righteousness and purity, hates sin, and thereby reconciled God—*i. e.*, the divine wrath—and reconciled us to God.[2] Luther would, indeed, have liked to see the word, "satisfaction" (*Genugthuung*), entirely banished from the Church and theology, on account of the misuse of it in the prevalent doctrine concerning man's own works; yet he continues to employ it in connection with the work of Christ, which he sets in direct contrast with man's futile efforts. It makes, however, he holds, far too little account of the grace of Christ, and does not give sufficient recognition to the sufferings which He endured; since Christ not only rendered satisfaction for sin, but also deliv-

[1] Cf., supra, p. 284 sq.

[2] Erl. Ed., vii, 298 sqq., 175 sq., 178, 195; xv, 385; x, 172; xi, 290; x, 172. As to the "paying" and "reconciling" of the wrath of God, compare further, e. g., iii, 137 sq.; xlvi, 315 sq.; l, 179.

ered us from the power of death, the devil and hell, and established an everlasting kingdom of grace and of daily, perpetual forgiveness. The term does not include, by far, all that is embraced in the saving work of Christ.[1] In contrast with the idea, that the satisfaction rendered by Christ's sufferings is not all-sufficient but must be supplemented by man's own efforts, Luther declares: Even a drop of Christ's innocent blood would be more than enough for the sin of the whole world; but the Father desired to pour out His grace upon us so abundantly that He allowed the Son to shed all His blood, and bestowed this treasure all upon us.[2]

The chief stress in the rendering of this satisfaction is thus laid, as has been said, upon the sufferings and death of Christ, in which He bears our sins. But it must be observed also that, in connection with this suffering, Luther always keeps in view the moral character and the active moral deportment of Jesus in assuming and enduring it. It is this, again, which gives to the sufferings of Christ their validity and value in the sight of God. The blood of Christ is innocent. It is the holiness and spotlessness of the sacrifice that avail. Christ atoned (paid) for us by the suffering of a pure, innocent death.[3] This brings us back again to the observation, that Luther combines in one general conception the validity and efficacy of Christ's sufferings and that of His active obedience. It is His obedience by which we are sanctified and justified. It pleases the Father that He has out of *love* given His life for us; and, on account of the blamelessness of His love and obedience, His believing followers are also well-pleasing in the sight of the Father.[4] Even the culminating experience in the sufferings of Jesus, *i. e.*, His prolonged agony of soul, is regarded by Luther as a testing of His moral character. This is involved in the frequent representation of His sufferings as finding a parallel in the spiritual temptations of other pious persons, as the prominent thought in the latter cases is always that of a moral fortitude under the trial. We must be careful, however, in the case of Jesus, never to lose

[1] Erl. Ed., xi, 280. Op. Ex., x, 125, 134. Erl. Ed., xi, 296 sq.

[2] Ibid., li, 366. Comm. ad Gal., i, 195.

[3] Ibid., xii, 422; iv, 302; xx, 160-16 .

[4] Supra, p. 391. Erl. Ed., xlvi, 27.

sight of the significance of the "punitive suffering," to which, as we have seen, such great importance is to be attached, inasmuch as the terrors which He is called upon to endure have come upon Him simply because He took upon Himself our sin and its curse. Thus Jesus, in the very moment of His supreme distress, in which He yet did not lose His confidence in God, is presented to us as our pattern. The assaults made upon Him by the devil as He hung upon the cross are represented as parallel with the Satanic temptation in the wilderness. They were essentially temptations to allure Him from fellowship with God. Luther cites also the statements of Heb. v. 8; ii. 18.[1] He does not, however, when seeking to assist persons in spiritual distress to overcome their fear of wrath and hell, commonly develop any further the idea that Christ was thus *morally tested*,[2] but he comprises the whole general subject in the statement, that Christ has *borne* what now alarms us, and—has *overcome* it.

In regard to God Himself, finally, to whose justice salvation is rendered and who is reconciled, it is to be ever borne in mind, that the reconciliation was instituted by Him when, purely out of His own unfathomable mercy, He sent forth His Son to render satisfaction, in order that thus the way might be prepared for mercy to work upon us and in us, and to crown us with eternal blessings and salvation.[3]

With the above views concerning the satisfaction which has been rendered to the divine righteousness we may associate also the deliverances already cited concerning the final judgment of the devil, the Law, etc., inasmuch as it is, in both instances, an exercise of justice which is thought of. That Christ was, by virtue of His personal character, upon the ground of justice, free from the Law and its curse, which He suffered to fall upon Him, is set before us vividly in the assertion that the Law itself was guilty of injustice in its treatment of Him. The integrity before the Law which believers now possess, by virtue of their fellowship with Him, is ascribed to the fact that the condemnation of the Law for the injustice visited by it upon Christ now inures also to their benefit. We would, furthermore, destroy the peculiar char-

[1] Comp. the above-cited passages concerning Christ's abandonment by God and wrestling with Him. Also, Erl. Ed., iv, 31; ii, 134, 136. Op. Ex., xvi, 249, 254; xvii, 122.

[2] Op. Ex., xvi, 249,

[3] Supra, p. 285. Erl. Ed., xv, 385; vii, 175.

acteristic feature of Luther's teaching if we should attempt to reduce all his figurative utterances to the precise limits of his literal dogmatic statements. He employs such figures of speech, evidently, in the consciousness that they suggest more than can be expressed in literal terms and precise definitions.

But in thus apprehending the obedience and the sufferings of Jesus, and especially in their relation to divine justice, we have by no means reached the limit of Luther's conception and teaching in regard to the once-for-all completed work of the Saviour. We have seen that the idea of "satisfaction" did not content the Reformer himself.

We are led further by his representation of Christ as "*overcoming.*" He is said to have overcome all the burdens which He bore and all the powers beneath which He trembled—sin, Law, devil, death and hell. Even though Luther speaks of injustice, which these hostile powers have perpetrated, and of their consequent condemnation, he yet says again, in general, that Christ has overpowered and overcome them. This He accomplished already in Gethsemane and upon the cross, standing firm in His temptation, vanquishing by His divine power[1] in the distress which would have been for any creature unendurable, experiencing and conquering the terrors of the Law,[2] and quenching in His innocent heart the fiery darts of Satan.[3] Luther refers here, finally, with very special emphasis, to the *resurrection* of Christ. After having on the cross had all these powers resting upon Him, and having died beneath the burden, He now reveals Himself as Lord over them all. They have made trial of their power upon Him, but have accomplished nothing. He rises again from death in all His power, and, as the Psalm declares, takes captivity captive, *i. e.*, breaks the power of the hostile forces and takes from them their dominion.[4] Luther opposes specifically to death, in this transaction, the eternal divine life dwelling in Christ—in the "strange war in which death and life struggled" and life gained the victory. To the sin assailing Christ, he opposes His invincible holiness, or even the "right-

[1] Erl. Ed., iii, 24. [2] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 155.

[3] Erl. Ed., iii, 201.

[4] Ibid., iii, 29; iv, 7. In reference especially to the Law, cf., e. g., Comm. ad Gal., ii, 156: Vanquished upon the cross, it is completely condemned and abolished in the resurrection of Christ.

eousness of the Father" (John xvi. 8 sq.) dwelling in Him and swallowing up all our sin; to the Law, His unassailable character and His exaltation above it; to the devil, His superior power and Himself as divine; to them each, and all in general, His divine nature, His righteousness, His power, His life, and the divine grace which resided in Him—and to the sins of men also, *e. g.*, His divine authority by virtue of which they are blotted out and cannot hold Him, whilst He, on the contrary, rises in triumph over them in the resurrection.[1] To the struggle with these powers and victory over them, belongs also, as we shall observe more particularly hereafter, not only the resurrection which followed the death of Christ, but also the descent into hell which occurred in the interval between these two events. Luther's conception of the conquest of the devil being that the latter swallowed Christ at His death, imagining that He would in consequence of His weak humanity prove an easy morsel to swallow, but that Jesus, even while dead, put an end to the kingdom of the devil—he, with Gregory the Great, represents the transaction under the figure of leviathan, or the great whale, which, with the angle-worm, the humanity of Christ, swallowed also the sharp hook, His divinity; and under that of the whale, which the little ichneumon allows to play with it and take it in its jaws, in order then to rend the intestines of the great animal. The devil, represented hitherto as condemned on account of the wrong perpetrated by him against Christ, here appears as deceived by divine strategy. Luther speaks also with reference to the Law, not only of a wrong perpetrated by it, but also of a deception practiced upon it, declaring that Christ secretly crept beneath it, and it then thought that it had in Him a mere man. Death itself is also personified, and then spoken of by Luther as interchangeable with the devil.[2]

What, then, is, for Luther, involved in this conquest? We must reply: In general, the entire abolition of the opposing forces in their fundamental character, in such a way that there

[1] Erl. Ed., iii, 302 sqq.; lvi, 321. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 21. Erl. Ed., xii, 97; xvii, 117; xv, 58. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 157. Erl. Ed., xviii, 150; iii, 342. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 20 sqq. Erl. Ed., xvii, 117; xi, 196.

[2] Ibid., xviii, 91, 7; xlv, 318; xxxiii, 107; xv, 261; xviii, 176. As to the rending of the body of death and the devil, cf. supra, p. 126, and especially, also, Vol. I., p. 171.

is thereby revealed the real, eternal, exhaustless Power and Source of our deliverance from all evil and of the new life, in the most comprehensive sense of the word. Upon the side of Christ, however, we must combine with the victory achieved in the resurrection also the entire state and activity into which He enters through the resurrection. Thus, it is taught that, having by His resurrection vanquished sin, death and hell, He now sits in eternal life at the right hand of God, reigns over all things, gathers His Church by the preaching of the Gospel, represents believers in His intercessions, and gives to them the power of His Holy Spirit that they may overcome sin, death and the devil.[1] In His ascent from death to the skies, He led captive the captivity of sin in such a way that it can no longer accuse and condemn us, and, at the same time, in such a way that the power of its enticements and allurements over us is at an end. Christ now reigns in a new life. Death has lost all its power, and thus we also are made alive in Christ. Here, too, as the curse of the Law has been overcome, so, likewise, the entire office of the Law as a taskmaster has been for us abolished. This liberty is imparted to us in faith through the Holy Ghost, whom the ascended Christ bestows upon us.[2] Luther attributes this *all-comprehensive conquest and blotting out of sin*, etc., together with reconciliation with God, also, it is true, to the sufferings and death of Christ;[3] but he regards it as finally completed only in the resurrection. And the fact itself, that we have been reconciled to God and have forgiveness, though commonly associated by Luther directly with the sufferings of Christ, is yet, again, represented as fully assured only by the resurrection. He declares that Christ "*suffers* for us, *rises* from the dead, and *thus* reconciles us to the Father, so that we have for His sake the forgiveness of sins"; and again: "We must believe the fruit of the resurrection—what we have thereby received, namely, forgiveness and remission of all sins—that Christ has passed through death (*i. e.*, evidently, suffering and victorious), and has thereby overcome sin and death, yea, everything that can harm us," etc.[4] Thus the resurrection is a chief article of faith. It and the ascension are alone our com-

[1] Erl. Ed., xii, 118; li, 137.
[2] Ibid., iv, 29, 31; iii, 303; vii, 265; xiv, 155.
[3] E. g., Erl. Ed., xlix, 191. [4] Ibid., xii, 118, 174.

fort, life, eternal happiness, righteousness and our all. "Christ arisen (*resuscitatus*) is our righteousness and our victory." [1]

But what is, according to this, in Luther's teaching, the relation of this entire process of conquest to the satisfaction rendered by Christ's obedience and suffering? It may be asked whether the work of our salvation must not be regarded as already really completed by the satisfaction thus rendered, in so far as it was to be objectively, and once for all, accomplished. We might be inclined to find the significance of the following events only in the facts, that the resurrection is, in one view, an actual declaration [2] and confirmation of the divine Sonship, of the innocence of the crucified Saviour, and of the acceptance by God of the satisfaction which He had rendered, and, still further, as the means of ushering Christ into the sphere of those active efforts which He could not until afterwards exert upon us through His Spirit, and by which alone He could afford to separate individuals the enjoyment of that which He had already fully obtained by means of the satisfaction rendered. But we would utterly destroy the peculiar character of Luther's view and of his teaching were we to attempt to introduce into it such a discrimination of the combined elements. He himself evidently regards the activity, labors and miracles of the Son of God, in contrast with the hostile forces, as continuous until the resurrection, whereupon then, from the victory here completely won, proceeds the further operation of the exalted Saviour upon our own souls. We must not, on account of the figurative drapery of his speech, transform this thought into one quite different, but may rather recall what has been already remarked in regard to his figurative language, and the similar cautions which he has himself given.

The result of the Saviour's victorious struggle is, then, His own victorious passage through His death to celestial life, and, at the same time, the vanquishment of the opposing forces in general—not only for Himself, but also for the human race. It was the deliberate aim of Luther to embrace and combine these two achievements directly in one view. None the less must we, in attempting to follow his guidance, ever remember that he would have us conceive and represent in inseparable unity that which

[1] Erl. Ed., xii, 174; li, 137 sq.; iii, 306; xii, 88 sq. Comm. ad Gal., i, 37; iii, 150.

[2] Cf. Erl. Ed., xvii, 117.

Christ has accomplished for us by the entire mediatorial process. Primarily, indeed, the main thing is, for him, the canceling of guilt, or "reconciliation of God," and, as the basis for this, the satisfaction rendered by Christ. But the same mediatorial process, inseparable in itself, is conceived as directly involving further for humanity the real power for the subjective unburdening of the guilty conscience, for the complete appropriation of salvation by men, for the continuous conquest of sin and Satan also by the adherents of the victorious Saviour; and it is only by virtue of this connection that we see the actual achievement of that which is the primary aim of the satisfaction rendered by Christ, *i. e.*, reconciliation. Luther represents the resurrection as contributing also to this result. If we insist upon any further analysis, definition, or gradation of the separate elements, we demand precisely that which Luther does not, and did not design to, furnish.

If we now seek to discover the *distinguishing peculiarity of Luther's general doctrine of the work of Christ* in the interest of human salvation, we shall find it to lie partly in the profound way in which he conceives the separate elements of the subject, and, very especially, the sufferings of Jesus, and in the variety of form in which he applies the total activity and endurance, deportment and life, of Jesus—a peculiarity which may very easily be noted by a comparison of his theory with that of his scholastic predecessors;[1] but, none the less, also in the apprehension and combination of the separate elements in their most immediate unity, under mystical and symbolical forms of conception and representation. We may add, further, that Luther himself, in the course of advancing years, never aimed at a further separation of the elements thus embraced, nor at minute abstract definitions—a fact which is particularly noticeable in reference to the conquest achieved by Christ and its relation to His work of satisfaction. On the contrary, he had already, in that portion of the *Church Postils* which appeared in 1521,[2] presented the doctrine of the satisfaction rendered by Christ as definitely as at any later period; and, in fact, all his more precise discussions of this aspect of Christ's work are found already in the *Church Postils*. In his later writings, on the other hand, whilst still speaking, indeed,

[1] Cf. Thomasius, Christi Person und Werk, Bk. III., Part I.

[2] Erl. Ed., vii.

of "satisfaction" and "payment" in connection with the comprehensive conception of "overcoming," he does not attempt to develop the ideas at any length. In the extended portrayal of the mediatorial work in the *Commentary upon Galatians*, this feature does not receive special consideration (although by no means forgotten),[1] but the controlling idea is the sublime image of the conflict of Jesus against all the forces hostile to His general work of salvation, which are, in the issue, overcome and abolished on account of the injustice which they have perpetrated upon Him, and by the force of His holiness, might and divinity.

For the entire, once-for-all completed work of Christ, Luther employs the traditional term, "merit" (*verdienen*), especially in contrast with the supposed merits of men themselves. We are to believe, he says, "that Christ performed superabundantly works and merits both fitting and worthy (*congrui et condigni*). This "meriting" falls also, like the "paying" and "satisfying," under the general conception of a judicial transaction, and is accomplished primarily by means of the satisfaction rendered in suffering and obedience. Forgiveness is said to be "earned from" (*abverdient*) God. But this "merit" itself is also particularly set forth as based upon the entire mediatorial process, including the resurrection. "It behooved Christ (Lk. xxiv. 46) to suffer and to rise the third day: herein lies His merit" (that upon the basis of which follows, in the preaching of the Gospel, the distribution of His merit). Instead of the word "*verdienen*" (merit, or earn), Luther employs frequently, as synonymous, the more general terms, "*erwerben*" (work out, gain) and "*erlangen*" (obtain). And, just as he declares that grace, or the free gift (Rom. v. 15), has been earned (merited) for us by Christ, so has he also employed the term, "*meritum*", to describe directly the benefit itself which has been secured for us by Christ and which rests in Him, and this, conceived not only as the grace of forgiveness, but, at the same time also, as inwardly sanctifying grace. "The merits of Christ are spirit and life, are grace and truth—which make him who follows better in spirit and holier" (in contrast with indulgences).[2]

[1] Erl. Ed., i, 195.

[2] Comm. ad Gal., 195, 135. Supra, Vol. I., p. 172. Erl. Ed., xv, 385; xi, 290; xxx, 184. Jena, ii, 426; iii, 233 b; i, 308 b (Löscher, iii, 775 sq.) Supra, Vol. I., p. 269 sq.

We have now noted the chief particulars in Luther's doctrine concerning the redeeming work of Christ. A few remarks must yet be added upon some special points embraced in the general presentation of the subject.

In connection with the doctrine of the *Intervention of Christ*, with His mediatorial work, in our stead, the question may arise, how Luther explains the possibility of such an intervention of one person in behalf of others. This is a point which he never attempts to discuss exhaustively. He simply announces it as a fact, with appeal to the Scriptures and the divine appointment, and with a general reference to the fellowship of Christ with us by virtue of His human nature and the capacity of His body for suffering. Yet we dare not here fail to observe how Luther represents, as parallel with what Christ has done and does for us that which His followers are to do for one another and, also, in the communion of saints, to receive from one another. He at first even tolerated, for this idea, the term, "merits" (*Verdienste*). He then made use of the expression, that believers also should "set their righteousness before God in behalf of their neighbor." Even at a later period, he insists that the Christian should care for his neighbor as Christ cared for *him;* should place at his neighbor's disposal the fulness of blessings which he has himself received from Christ, and freely offer himself with these to the service of his neighbor; should serve the latter by his piety, and bear his sins and failings, just as he himself enjoys the benefit of Christ's righteousness; and should himself, likewise, find comfort in the fellowship of suffering and of blessings with all other saints.[1]

We must here, indeed, carefully observe the essential difference between the cases thus compared.[2] There is, even in the first instance, no thought here of such merit as that of Christ, nor, indeed, of merit at all in the proper sense of the word: and it afterwards becomes perfectly clear that only such an intervention of one person in behalf of others is meant as is exemplified in intercessory prayer, or in the labor of one person for the spiritual welfare of others. At all events, this burden-bearing for others is not thought of as in itself vicariously taking away guilt. But

[1] Supra, Vol. I., pp. 271, 343 sq., 416 sq. Erl. Ed., vii, 227; x, 19; xi, 167, 190; l, 224 sqq., 250.

[2] Cf. already Vol., I., p. 416 sq.

even thus, the idea of a fellowship and "assumption," as presented in the parallel in question, remains significant. Worthy of note, too, are the declarations of Luther in regard to the *Sympathy* of Christ, found in his comments upon Isa. liii. 4, compared with Matt. viii. 17.[1] Matthew, says he, applies the words, not to the literal sufferings of Christ, nor to His agony on the cross, but to His sympathy with our weakness as constantly manifested throughout His whole life; but, "although that is compassion (*compassio*), and not actual suffering (*passio*), nevertheless that *compassion* was without doubt *a great part, if not the whole, of the suffering of Christ.*" He then proceeds to say, that Christ thus declares in Ps. lxxxviii. 15: "I am poor, and in toils from my youth" (the same passage which he elsewhere[2] applies to the sufferings of Christ in general); that the pains which the devil inflicts upon us were a cross to Him constantly, by day and by night;[3] that we may see illustrations of this in His compassion for the suffering (Mk. vi. 34), in the extreme emotion of His pity (Mk. iii. 21), and in His compassion shown toward Judas at the last supper; that He pities us because He sees us so terribly oppressed by the devil; that these pains were borne by Him until He hung upon the cross, where, as is declared in Heb. v. 7, He offered up prayers with tears, *i. e.*, in His "Father, forgive them," etc.; that He here heaved the deepest sigh, at which heaven and earth trembled. Even among the heathen, he declares, the emotion of pity is very strong; and in the holy Son of God was found this emotion in its perfection, as the intensest pity. Luther thus finds, even to the very culminating point of the Saviour's sufferings, as an essential element, and even as the chief element, a feeling of sympathy for us analogous to our human sympathy for one another. But we must content ourselves with having thus briefly called attention to this thought. We cannot stop to trace it in the leading passages previously quoted in connection with the general idea that Christ has suffered for us.

Our review of the work of Christ in our behalf has led us through the entire life of the God-man on earth, from His birth to His ascension. We must yet consider more carefully the

[1] Op. Ex., xxiii, 482 sqq.

[2] Supra, p. 396.

[3] Cf. the "terrors" spoken of, supra, p. 396.

significance of His *Descent into Hell.* Luther always regards Ps. xvi. 10, in connection with Acts ii. 24, 27, as furnishing the main scriptural support of the doctrine. There is some wavering, however, in his conception of the event. He was in doubt whether Christ descended in order, after having already endured the pangs of hell upon the cross, and having thus been in hell, to endure these pangs still further during a local stay in the abode of the lost, or whether He descended merely in order to follow up the victory which He had already gained upon the cross to its glorious consummation in His resurrection. The latter interpretation occurs already in his *First Exposition of the Psalms*, if we are to accept as a part of his original annotations the comments upon Ps. lvii. 4 (lvi. 5): "The soul of Jesus was, after His death, among the devils—and announced to them the destruction of their kingdom."[1] It is given the decided preference, although the other interpretation is not excluded, in the "*Short Form of the Ten Commandments*," etc. (A. D. 1520):[2] "Christ descended * * * to take captive the devil and all his power * * * and (has) delivered me from the pain of hell." The expression in *De libertate Christiana, i. e.*, that Christ died and descended into hell in order to overcome all things,[3] is not decisive. The language employed in the *Sermon of A. D. 1519*,[4] *i. e.*, that Christ went into hell and was forsaken of God, according to Matt. xxvii. 46, has no relation to the present question, since it refers only to the inner sufferings of Christ upon the cross,[5] and not to the subsequent descent into hell. On the other hand, in the *Exposition of Psalm xvi.*, which appeared in 1521,[6] Luther takes the other view, declaring that the soul of Christ really descended after His death "*ad inferos*"; that it has, indeed, not been very clearly shown precisely what was involved in this; but that it appears, however, to follow from the "loosing of the pains", spoken of in Acts ii. 24, that, as Christ had died in the greatest pain, so He was there, too, called upon to endure pains, in order to overcome all things. In the *Commentary upon Jonah*, however, of A. D. 1526,[7] he understands

[1] Walch, ix, 1878.
[2] Erl. Ed., xxii, 18.
[3] Jena, i, 466 (Cf. Vol. I., p. 414).
[4] Erl. Ed., xxi, 262.
[5] Cf. Op. Ex., xvi, 245.
[6] Ibid., xv, 378 sq.
[7] Erl. Ed., xli, 378 sq.

the "pains" of Acts ii. 24 as being those which Jesus experienced at His death, inasmuch as he does not now conceive of hell as being a separate place before the Day of Judgment, but regards "Sheol" as indicating merely, in general, the final distress and agony of the dying. In the *Enarratio* upon Ps. xvi. (A. D. 1530), he sees in it, "Everything which there is in the place to which we depart after life, whether it be the sepulchre or something else," and upon this bases the article of the *Descensus*, making no mention of pains, but speaking only of the inability of hell and the grave to retain Christ, and of His victory over death and the devil. He afterwards, in a *Second Exposition of the Psalm*, repeats the statement, that the true hell of fire had as yet no existence, and expresses the opinion that the hell to which Christ went was nothing else than the grave of the soul, although we cannot comprehend such things in our human thoughts. He yet expresses his approval of the pictures and hymns of the Fathers, setting forth Christ's descent into hell and deliverance from it, since we cannot portray it otherwise than by such figurative representations; but he will hear nothing of questions concerning a real or efficacious (*secundum substantiam vel efficaciam*) descent.[1] We hear no more, accordingly, of further sufferings endured by Christ after His death. In a *Sermon of A. D. 1532*, in the *House Postils*,[2] and also in the *Torgau Sermon of A. D. 1533*,[3] referring to the ancient hymns and paintings in which Christ appears with a banner in His hand, bursting the bars of hell, he places the significance of the *Descensus* most distinctly in the fact, that the devil has now no power over Christ and His followers, but that Christ, upon the contrary, has broken into hell, overcome the devil and delivered those who were enslaved by him. He repeats the statement, that we cannot speak of this article without figures of speech, in literal and precise language. He declares also expressly that Christ descended to hell as true God and man, with body and soul undivided, thus in this event, as always, representing the entire one person as the agent. He then again warns against further and vain questionings. Still further, in the *Exposition of Gen. xlii.*,[4] written probably in the latter part of the year 1544,[5] he appears unwilling to assert

[1] Op. Ex., xvii, 124 sqq. Erl. Ed., xxxviii, 143 sqq.
[2] Erl. Ed., iii, 280 sqq.
[3] Ibid., xx, 165 sqq.
[4] Cf. Briefe, v, 714.
[5] Op. Ex., x, 219.

even so much as in the passage just cited, declaring: "What the soul did in hell—whether it spoiled the powers and liberated those there imprisoned—it avails not to ask and curiously pry into." It is enough for him to know that the saints are certainly delivered forever from the power of hell. He asserts expressly that the punishments of Gehenna, which is to be distinguished from Sheol, were endured by Christ while still in the flesh.[1]

Whilst the passages of Scripture above cited are positively interpreted by Luther as referring to an event subsequent to the death of Jesus, lying, from the very nature of the case, beyond the sphere of our comprehension, the meaning of the language employed in 1 Pet. iii. 18 sqq. and iv. 6 is quite obscure to him. In his exposition of this epistle in A. D. 1523, he is inclined to apply this "strange text and dark verse" to the preaching of the divine Word, which is, through His messengers and His Spirit, carried out from the ascended Saviour to the souls of men living upon earth and held in bondage by the devil, who are like the unbelievers of Noah's time, or among whom the latter are to be classed.[2] But in a manuscript without date, he candidly confesses his inability to discover the meaning of the passage.[3] When Melanchthon, in 1531, reported to Spalatin that, in the opinion of Bugenhagen, the passage was to be interpreted of the heathen, to whom the Gospel was preached after the resurrection of Christ, and that the latter had almost convinced Luther (who did, indeed, entertain this view in 1523) of the correctness of his opinion, Luther himself wrote upon the margin of Melanchthon's letter the brief annotation: "*Non est verum.*"[4] We afterwards find him, in the *Commentary upon Genesis vii.*,[5] pursuing an entirely different line of interpretation, maintaining that "the deceased Christ preached to an unbelieving world which had been snatched away in the divine judgment of the Flood, in order still to make out of it a new and believing world"—that is, certainly, not to the wicked despisers of the Word and tyrants, but to children and others, who, in their simplicity, were not able to believe in the coming of the terrible judgment threatened by Noah, but looked for a further exhibition of the patience of God.[6]

[1] Cf. supra, p. 398 sq.

[2] Erl. Ed., li, 458 sqq.

[3] Lutherbriefe, Seidemann, p. 79.

[4] Briefe, vi, 130.

[5] Op. Ex., ii, 221 sqq.; written probably in 1537; published in 1544.

[6] Cf. the passage 1 Pet., iii, 20 in the Vulgate: qui increduli fuerant, quando expectabant, Dei patientiam, etc.

Peter, thinks Luther, was led to this declaration, which sounds almost like the unauthorized utterance of an enthusiast, by the thought of the terrible nature of the divine wrath which once swept away indiscriminately so many persons; and he is himself, he declares, inclined by similar reflections to accept the revelation which is, upon this theory, made by the apostle in regard to those thus swept away. He adds the remark, that we may not unfitly interpret the article upon the *Descensus* in the Creed as referring to this event. He yet, indeed, however strongly he is inclined to this interpretation, not only upon exegetical grounds but also by dogmatic interest, does not venture to express any positive opinion. But he continues to lean toward this view. In precisely the same way, but yet more decidedly, he in 1545 declares:[1] Peter says clearly "that Christ appeared not only to the deceased fathers, some of whom He without doubt, when He arose, awakened with Himself to eternal life, but also *preached to some* who in the time of Noah did not believe, and who looked for the patience of God," *i. e.*, who hoped that God would not deal so harshly with all flesh (such unbelievers are therefore meant as those spoken of in the comment upon Gen. vii.), in order *that they might realize that their sins were pardoned through the sacrifice of Christ.* To this, he again says, the article of the *Descensus* in the Creed is to be applied. That which Luther deduced from Ps. xvi. and Acts ii. 27 upon this subject must, therefore, be now supplemented by that which he afterwards found in 1 Pet. iii. 18 sqq. This harmonizes, moreover, very easily with the conception of Christ as, through His descent to hell, overcoming the devil and setting his captives free. But, although the view of Luther, so far as he is led to express himself, remains such as we have found it in the passages last cited, yet he still prefers[2] to avoid altogether more definite deliverances upon the subject.

[1] Under Hos. vi. 2. Jena, iv, 638: How greatly dogmatic bias may for Lutherans becloud the vision of the evident meaning of Luther, is manifest, e. g., from the misconception of it even by the acute Seckendorf., Hist. Luth., Lib. III., § 127. I refrain from expressly exposing the lack of information in regard to Luther's real opinion and teaching shown by modern writers. Enough has been said.

[2] Cf. what has been said above in connection with Gen. xlii. Op. Ex., x, 219.

We have not specifically discussed *the significance of the Ascension of Christ to Heaven*. It is, however, directly associated, in Luther's view, with that of the resurrection, as has been manifest in the preceding discussion. What Christ, as the ascended Lord, actually effects, we have already seen fully summarized in a passage above cited [1]—the governing of heaven and earth, and, especially, presiding over and in the Church through His Spirit and Word—and the continuous mediatorial intercession for believers in the presence of the Father. Luther regards the latter as continuous, with special reference to the continuance of sin in the regenerate,[2] who are not to seek grace for even their yet remaining sins in any effort of their own; but he presents this thought in such a way that, even for the continuous forgiveness thus interceded for, the once-consummated, superabundant merit of Christ remains the permanent basis. The further discussion of the presiding presence of Christ within the congregation of His followers will find its appropriate place under the doctrine of the impartation of salvation, and, particularly, under the doctrine of the Church.

We have now, with Luther, presented in detail the work of Christ in which He has instituted redemption—the work which was present to the view of the eternal God from all eternity, and upon which, therefore, was based all forgiveness of sins from the days of Adam. In doing so we have found the entire life and activity of Christ standing in intimate relation with this, His mediatorial work.

The significance of the *Teaching* which is so marked a feature of His ministry for us has thus far not claimed our special attention, or, rather, has come into view merely as one element in His fulfilment of the divine will in love toward us.

This phase of the Saviour's active work must now, however, in view of its relation to the remaining doctrines in the theological system of Luther, be accorded its rightful and exceedingly significant position. The salvation, provided as we have seen, has, from the very beginning, been imparted only through the Word addressed to the individual, in which divine truth, and especially the gracious will of God and the work of His grace,

[1] Erl. Ed., xii, 118; supra, p. 411. [2] Vid., l. c.

have been revealed to the consciousness and the understanding for believing acceptance. And this revelation itself now attains its consummation in the Son of God always through *His* Word. Everything which He has heard from the Father He has proclaimed, so that even the Spirit can and is to teach nothing different or new.[1] Speaking of that which He has Himself seen, He testifies what is the disposition of the Father, and that it is the will of the Father to save men through Him, the Mediator. It is here, in the Son, that we first rightly hear the voice of the Father, throbbing with pure, fathomless love. In the Son Himself, in the complete revelation of His own person, we become acquainted with the entire Trinity. As He, in His Word and work, presents to us both Himself and the Father, He is for us the true Epistle from on high, the golden Book.[2] He also, in connection with this revelation, gives commandments and teaches the Law. This is not, however, His own peculiar office, but only an incident of His mission. He is essentially a preacher of life, grace and righteousness.[3] He thus preaches, finally, in His present state of exaltation, through His Spirit, to the souls of men, through the medium of His Word upon the lips of His heralds. It is precisely through the Word thus preached that He gathers the Christian Church, which is to enjoy the benefit of His redemption.[4]

There have thus been presented to us, in the writings of Luther, all the features embraced in our Saviour's administration of His three-fold office as prophet, priest and king.

He is a *High Priest*, since He, by His great redemptive work, appears for us before the Father, presents Himself as a sacrifice, and pleads for us. It is not needful for us here to cite particular examples from the great multitude of passages in which Luther employs the above title to indicate this part of the work of Christ. He employed this doctrine, as we have seen, in opposing the human priesthood taught by the Romish Church, and then advanced to the advocacy of the priesthood of all believers, who are now to bring their thank-offerings through Christ, the Reconciler and Mediator, to God.

[1] Erl. Ed., l, 72; cf. supra, p. 222.

[2] Ibid., xlvii, 35 sq., 142 sq., 357, 345; xviii, 207.

[3] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 156. Erl. Ed., xix, 223. Op. Ex., xiii, 243.

[4] Erl. Ed., li, 459 sq.; xii, 118.

Christ is, further, *Lord and King*, sitting at the right hand of God, ruling over heaven and earth, men and angels, and everything which is subject to the control of God. His is divine power. But Luther commonly, when speaking of Christ's kingdom, or dominion, understands especially His spiritual kingdom in the Church, which holds sway over the hearts and consciences of men—the kingdom of grace, in which Christ, the King, Himself grants the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, His Spirit and life; in which He, as the Head, infuses into the members of His spiritual body all life, power of perception, and impulse to activity; and over whose subjects He, as Lord, Himself bears sway. To this dominion Luther then ascribes also that agency of Christ, in the exercise of His general divine power, by which He, as the Almighty, protects and gives prosperity to His Church in every respect, even in the face of the oppositions of the outward world and all calamities and enemies. But, says he, this kingdom, by which Christ rules in the present life, is concealed by a veil from our view. We do not see Him, but must believe. Out of His kingdom, however, which is a kingdom of the Word and faith, shall arise another, in which we shall behold the Father and Christ, as do the angels now (Matt. xviii. 10). This shall come to pass when, according to 1 Cor. xv. 25–28, all enemies shall have been put under the feet of the Son of God, and He shall then give over the kingdom to the Father. Luther thus discriminates between the former kingdom, in which the Son is, in a special sense, the King, and shall be so while this world endures—in which He, without exclusion of the Father and the Spirit, "bears the name, and rules here below by His Gospel"— and that other kingdom which, for us, still lies in the future. Both are, however, as he adds, essentially one. We have already in the earthly kingdom the essential blessings of the kingdom yet to come; we are already in the kingdom of heaven—yea, in heaven itself. There remains yet only the veil drawn before our eyes to conceal its glory.[1]

The connection of this royal dominion with the priestly functions of Christ's office is easily seen. The kingdom is one whose very chief feature is the forgiveness of sins. None the less, however, is it promoted by the agency of the Word, *i. e.*, through

[1] Erl. Ed., xl, 45–57; xiv, 120, 179 sq.; vi, 58; xvii, 224 sqq.

the prophetic office. Just this is an essential characteristic of this kingdom, that Christ was not to be a secular king with swords and martial array, but was to come as a preacher and teacher.[1]

It is particularly under the suggestion of Deut. xv. 15, 18, that Luther describes Christ as a *Prophet*. He contrasts with Moses the other prophet foretold by the great lawgiver, representing him as a preacher of life and grace, with whose advent were to be ushered in a new priesthood, a new kingdom, a new mode of divine worship.[2]

Luther has, however, left us no special systematic presentation of the three distinct offices of Christ with the peculiar features distinctive of each.

[1] Erl. Ed., xix, 97; xlvii, 142 sq.; xlv, 347 sq.

[2] Op. Ex., xiii, 240 sqq.

CHAPTER VI.

THE APPROPRIATION OF SALVATION BY FAITH, AND THE NEW LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.

1. *The Nature of Justifying Faith.*

TRUST IN THE MERCY OF GOD—EXPLICIT VS. IMPLICIT—GRASPING RATHER THAN LONGING—CHRIST FOR US AND IN US—RELATION TO INTELLECT, SENSIBILITIES AND WILL—AN ELEMENT OF REPENTANCE —A GIFT OF GOD.

"THOU hast given to me that which was Thine." Thus, according to Luther, should the Christian say to his Saviour. But the hand with whch we are to take the heavenly treasure is faith.

The NATURE OF FAITH we have found described by Luther as consisting primarily, according to Heb. xi. 1, in a directing (of the mind and heart) upon things unseen. With this was combined the idea of absolute resignation, of withdrawal from all things finite. We see him thus, at length, conducted to his peculiar and permanent evangelical position by his conception of faith. According to this, he held the unseen object upon which the latter was to be directed to be essentially the forgiving grace of God in Christ; that which was to be above all else renounced, man's own righteousness; and the proper attitude of the soul toward the object of faith, a trustful apprehension (grasping). This view of faith was revealed already in the writings of the Reformer before the indulgence controversy. It is more and more positively advocated in contrast with the elements peculiar to the pre-reformation Mysticism, as appears strikingly in the *Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*. Yet, side by side with it, we still meet, as, for example, in the *Christmas Sermon of A. D. 1522*, the same mystical expressions which the fanatical sects employed in support of their unevangelical views. The heart, it was said, must, in order that the Christ-child may come to it, "stand utterly vacant" (*gar ledig gelassen stehen*). It dare

take interest in nothing. The old hide must be laid off. Luther's view gained at length its definite and clear form through his opposition to the mysticism of such men as Carlstadt and Münzer.[1]

Faith is, therefore, a *living, firm, bold* (*erwägene:* ventured) *trust in the grace and mercy of God.* The "substance" (ὑπόστασις) of Heb. xi. 1, means such a "sure confidence," corresponding to הָקִים in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, which means "assured" (*stabilitus, certificatus*). Faith is "a standing fast (*Standfest*) of the heart, which does not waver, flounder, nor doubt," etc. That which is to be hoped for (Heb. xi.) is a good thing, *i. e.*, the mercy and grace of God. That which is "not seen," is that which we receive from Christ. More definitely stated, the object of faith is this Saviour bestowed upon us by the grace of God, the true Son of the Father, His death and resurrection for our salvation, the forgiveness of sins through Him, the righteousness and salvation revealed in Him. All this is offered to us in the divine Word of promise. Faith is "to inwardly approach the God who promises (*assentiri Deo promittenti*)." In this Word of promise, faith has God Himself and Christ, and it therefore holds fast to the very Word. It "clings to the Word, which is God Himself."[2]

This grace and promise of God the believer must always confidently apply, especially, to himself. "God is God to me, speaks to me, remits my sins," etc. Faith is a heartfelt confidence in God through Christ, that the sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ belong to *me*. This distinguishes true faith from that of the devil and the pope, the "*fides acquisita*" and "*fides infusa*" of the sophists. Thus, the article upon the forgiveness of sins assumes the central place in our whole system of faith. "If the other articles are to become part of our experience and really affect us, they must do so *in this article, i. e.*, namely, in that we all, I for myself and thou for thyself, believe the forgiveness of sins. This reaches us and makes the other articles also reach us.[3] The ordinary faith in God and the divine power may, indeed, even where this true Christian faith is wanting, become, by the special blessing of God, so strong as to remove mountains,

[1] Cf. supra, Vol. I., pp. 97 sq., 139, 159. Erl. Ed., xvi, 25 sqq.; supra, Vol. II., p. 24 sqq.

[2] Erl. Ed., xliii, 125; xxxvii, 7 sq; xiv, 215; xlvii, 326. Jena, i, 525 b, 539, 567. Erl. Ed., l, 310 sq. Op. Ex., v, 247. Erl. Ed., xv, 485; x, 154 sq.

[3] Op. Ex., v, 247. Jena, i, 539. Erl. Ed., xxxvi, 42; xlvii, 12; l, 310 sq.

but even then, according to 1 Cor. xiii. 2, it still profiteth nothing.[1]

It is manifest that, according to the views thus expressed, every individual must, in order to be saved, stand firm in *his own* faith, and must know *what* he believes. We are not saved by the faith of others. Nor will a faith such as that of a certain charcoal-burner suffice, who, when asked what he believed, could only reply: "What the Church believes," and when further asked, what the Church believes, could say no more than: "Just what I believe."

The discrimination made between an "*explicit*" and an "*implicit*" faith, the latter being sufficient for ordinary people, Luther regards as a pure fiction. That which is to be believed stands plainly revealed for every man in the Sacred Scriptures.

It is God, however, who grants to each individual the firm personal assurance of faith.[2] That the faith of others may at least be helpful, is acknowledged especially in Luther's teaching concerning infant baptism. But this is possible only in so far as the faith of another, by its intercession in my behalf, moves God to awaken faith in me.[3]

Luther here describes as attaining salvation the faith which confidently *lays hold upon the grace proffered in the divine Word* and clings to it; and in this, his present apprehension of faith differs from those earlier utterances[4] in which the divine proffer and man's acceptance of it fell into the background, while the chief prominence was given to desire and petition on the part of man. Faith is now regarded rather as grasping that which has been already tendered to it as a gift. It is "*fides apprehensiva Christi.*" "With open arms it embraces the Son of God given for it, lays hold upon and possesses this treasure, namely, Christ present." Firmly and confidently it rests in the Word of promise,

[1] Erl. Ed., viii, 115.

[2] Ibid., xxviii, 81, 403 sqq.; xxvi, 301; i, 189; xxxix, 133. Cf. supra, p. 226. Erl. Ed., xii, 362: "The experience of man's own conscience and the witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart."

[3] Unus quisque per se credit vel non credit, facit tamen aliena fides et impetrat, ut et ego mea propria fide credam; alioqui quid sunt orationes fidelium pro infidelibus, etc.? Erl. Ed., xiii, 299 sqq. Briefe ii, 277; vi, 340. Cf. Vol. I., pp. 276, 399 sq. Vol. II., p. 45.

[4] Vol. I., p. 243 sq.

venturing all upon it. Faith means "to risk one's self heartily and boldly upon the Word (*sich von Herzen auf das Wort erwägen*) —defying man, death and the devil," etc. Still, it is true, according to Luther, the germ of faith, which has been truly implanted in the heart by the Spirit, and is there living, may yet, under the stress of spiritual temptations, be so far concealed from the view of the believing heart itself, that the latter must rest content with the desire and unutterable groaning of spirit, and can only say: "O that it (the Word) were true! Ah! happy is he who can believe it!" But, in such case, God accounts this groaning of spirit and fragment of faith as complete faith.[1]

The laying hold upon (*Ergreifen*) and embracing (*Umfassen*) thus spoken of, Luther would have us understand in the full sense of those terms. Faith is to be, as it were, a bag or sack, into which the heavenly gift is received; or, reversing the figure, *we* are to insert (*stecken*) ourselves entirely into the Word concerning Christ, His death, resurrection, etc.[2] Faith is, finally, to truly unite us inwardly with the person of Christ Himself, since it lays hold upon Christ. The mystical idea of the indwelling Christ in the hearts of believers we no longer find so fully expanded as during the earlier period of the Reformer's life. The more decidedly faith was conceived as a simple trust, and the more definitely salvation was apprehended as primarily the forgiveness of sins, the more must Christ be presented to faith primarily as the objective basis of confidence and in connection with the objective work of reconciliation accomplished by Him. In strong contrast to Mysticism, in the narrower sense of that term, the Christ *for* us takes precedence of the Christ *in* us. We not infrequently are compelled to realize the danger, that, with the insistence upon the confession of and public testimony to all the revealed truth upon which our salvation is conditioned, in the midst of doctrines and theses the personal, living relation of the believer to his Saviour may be neglected. But, as a matter of fact, this always remains for Luther the principal thing. And while believers are said, in personal approach to Christ, to trust in Him, with this act Luther now again combines the inward

[1] Jena, i, 539. Comm. ad Gal., i, 191. Erl. Ed., xlvii, 326; iv, 40 sqq.; xii. 336.

[2] Erl. Ed., iv, 118; iii, 288.

entrance of Christ *into them*. If utterances of the latter kind are in his later less abundant than in in his earlier years, they yet display the same ideas and the same deep fervor of spirit. Such presentations as those found in the *Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* occur again especially in the sermons of the following years; as, for example, in the *Church Postils*. He still describes how Christ, as the Bridegroom, unites Himself with the believing soul; how man by faith enjoys (feeds upon) Christ, is transformed into His likeness and becomes entirely one loaf (*Kuchen*) with Him; how God pours Himself and Christ into us in order to deify us entirely. But a citation of later date, from the *Commentary upon Galatians*, has already called our attention to the real presence of Christ within believers. This present Christ, it is there further declared, dwells in their hearts, and is thus their righteousness; yea, He is not only the object of faith, but He is present also within it. The same publication declares also, that the Christ apprehended in faith is not, so to speak, only spiritually (*i. e.*, speculatively) within us, while really in heaven, but that He lives and works in us, who are the members of His body, "*realiter, praesentissime et efficacissime.*" Luther at a later day rises, in the *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, to very notable utterances in regard to unification with the Saviour. We are to rely alone, he there declares, upon Christ and His Word. Thus the heart now becomes one thing with His Word, and He Himself now dwells (*steckt*) in the believer who clings to the Word, and the believer dwells in Him. The Spirit, who awakens in me the heartfelt confidence of grace, makes of me an entirely new plant, rooted in Christ, and I am now like Him, so that He and I are now of one nature and kind. Thus Christ and Christians, as also Christians in their relation to one another, become one loaf (cake) and one body. This is such a union with Christ as resembles the combination of divine and human natures in His own person in one loaf, although the former is not so lofty and grand a union as the latter. He is essentially resident in us, and we are made with Him one flesh, which we cannot put asunder. Nothing less than this is meant by the eating of Christ by faith, which is spoken of in Jn. vi. Even the flesh and blood of Christ must be eaten in faith. "Eat," says the Lord: that is, "Believe it." He who lays hold upon it in faith, eats the flesh and blood which deifies and permeates with divinity, *i. e.*, gives

to the recipient the nature and power of divinity. He who was baked upon the cross is continually set before us in the Gospel as food, in order that we may believingly eat of Him and that He may be in us and we in Him.[1]

It would be a fruitless task to search in the writings of Luther for any more precise *psychological analysis* or definitions as to the nature of this faith. In opposition to the idea that love is properly the saving element in the believer's experience, he says in one place that the apprehension (*Ergreifen*) of the innocence and the victory of Christ is not a matter of our predilection (*voluntas dilectionis*), but a matter of the reason, enlightened by faith. Faith itself thus appears primarily as an intellectual exercise. Luther, moreover, locates faith directly in the "*intellectus*," in contrast with hope, which he attributes to the will. But, in the same connection, he declares also that faith in Christ, reposing with full confidence of heart in Him, is itself utterly impossible without the consent of the will (*sine voluntate*). At another time, he says: "The nature of faith must be learned, *i. e.*, that it is *will*, or knowledge, or hope, depending upon the Word of God."[2] The element of *emotion* comes into view in the utterance concerning the divine character and origin of faith.[3] Faith *feels* the certain truth of the Word, so that no one can tear it away from the latter.[3] Yet Luther is accustomed to maintain with peculiar earnestness, on the other hand, that the believer dare not imagine that he must always experience a sense of grace and blessedness; but that he must hold fast to the Word of grace even when he imagines that he can discover only indications of the divine displeasure in his outward circumstances or his inner life; that, in so far, faith must maintain itself without feeling, and even in opposition to it.[4] Luther is thus led to endeavor, as the nature of the case requires, to distinguish the inner assurance of the divine character of the Gospel, which is wrought directly and resistlessly by the Holy Spirit, from the sensuous and

[1] Erl. Ed., xiv, 193 sqq.; xv, 485, 343 sqq., 238; cf. supra, p. 367. Comm. ad Gal., i, 191 sq.; ii, 133 sq. Erl. Ed., xlix, 73 sq., 313, 296; l, 223 sq.; xlviii, 27 sqq., 34; xlvii, 390 sq.; iv, 241.

[2] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 25 sq., 29, 314. Op. Ex., xix, 199. Cf. Tischreden, Först., ii, 179. Erl. Ed., lviii, 379 ("assensus: consent of the will").

[3] Supra, p. 226 sq. Erl. Ed., x, 154.

[4] Cf. also Erl. Ed., xvii, 36; xxiii. 249.

natural emotions of the individual, and, yet further, from the experience of grace as having already entered the heart with its benign influences. It remains for Luther, under all circumstances, the principal thing, that faith be a matter of the heart, and that it exist in the heart, not as a cold, careless, dead thought, but as a living power, laying hold upon Christ, embracing Him, and hence vigorous and active in Christ.

We have been taught, however, that this faith, to which the heart is awakened by the proclamation of divine grace, and in which it is renewed in nature and life, cannot be implanted unless the heart has been previously most profoundly alarmed by the Law, with its stern rebukes of sin.[1] We are thus led to consider the position of faith as an *element of repentance*. The latter embraces faith, together wth the alarm of conscience awakened by the Law, and must, therefore, even in the regenerate, be constantly experienced anew on account of the continued presence of sin. We shall not, for the present, enter at greater length upon the question concerning the agency of the divine Word, in its two elements, Law and Gospel, in the awakening of repentance, as we reserve that feature of the subject for treatment in connection with the means of grace—but we shall here fix our attention upon the states of mind and heart produced in the individual. We shall now find presented fully and clearly the relations of the separate elements involved, such as the qualms of conscience, faith, love of righteousness, good resolutions, etc. Here will be brought to view in a clear light that general conception of the subject to which we have had occasion to trace back various utterances of the Reformer, some of which, separately considered, might have seemed to support divergent theories. For the further establishment of Luther's doctrine, after the controversy with Carlstadt, the discussion wth Agricola played a particularly important part. As he had previously found it necessary to maintain with special emphasis against the Papists, that not contrition, but faith, saves, and that true repentance springs from the love of righteousness; so he was now led to insist that man must, in all cases, first feel the "thunderbolt of God"—that repentance must begin with the fear and the judgment (*a timore et judicio*) of God. But he also now insists that

[1] Cf. especially, supra, p. 30.

the mere terrors of conscience which God awakens by the proclamation of His Law and the coming judgment by no means as yet bring the forgiveness of sins. *Such* penitence, indeed, or "*contritio*," is itself still only "sin rightly felt in the heart, and the power and dominion of sin." It can of itself, on the contrary, without the Word of grace and faith embracing that Word, only make us flee from God, and thus becomes a "Cain's repentance." In it, indeed, the working of the Holy Ghost upon the heart of man is already manifest, rebuking sin, but He cannot as yet enter the heart as the originator of inward blessedness and godly disposition. The knowledge of sin is only a necessary prerequisite (*causa sine qua non*) for justification. The only proper ground (*causa*) is the merit of Christ, or the mercy (of God), which the heart, aroused by the Spirit, apprehends in faith. There must, therefore, in order that a *saving* penitence may be produced, with every terror awakened by the Law, be enkindled in the heart also the spark of the divine compassion, by which the contrite soul may be lifted up and may begin to feel the divine mercy and to cry in its distress to God. From this stage of repentance, *i. e.*, from the dawning of faith in connection with contrition, we are led at length to that love of righteousness, with which alone repentance becomes rightly entitled to the name. We should, says Luther, "become hostile to sin from love, not from fear of punishment." We should repent from love to the Lord and reverence for Him. "To repent (*büssen:* do works of penitence) without love for righteousness and delight in it—is secretly to be at enmity with God." But this element is now clearly presented as one which is by no means involved in the antecedent terrors of conscience, but which, on the contrary, can be realized only in connection with grace and faith. It belongs to repentance in the broad conception of that term, as embracing the entire fundamental change of heart (*Sinnesänderung*), or "amendment." It is only through faith, however, that God gives such amendment. Repenting (*Büssen:* doing works of penitence) with love and delight is possible only as a fruit of the power of the keys, *i. e.*, after man has the sure consolation of grace. "Penitent souls ought to *take hope, and thus* to hate sin from what is, properly speaking, a good motive, *i. e.*, from the love of God." Thus, again, the proper and permanent blotting out of sin follows only upon the forgiveness of it, apprehended by faith, not, in-

deed, without continued distress and assailments of evil, but yet by means of the Spirit's gift now bestowed upon the believer. Thus faith in Christ brings the forgiveness of sins, and also their crucifixion through the Holy Spirit.[1]

But how, it may still be asked, *are repentance and faith called into existence* in the apprehension of the terrifying, and, particularly, of the promising and comforting, Word of God? We must here take as our starting-point Luther's doctrine concerning the state of the natural man, with his free will, or, rather, his utter incapacity.[2] In view of this, Luther flatly declares that faith is entirely the *work and gift of God*, who makes His Word effectual in the souls of men. Man's own will cannot hear when God speaks. He is, in truth, a pillar of salt like Lot's wife. Although we have nothing more to contribute to our righteousness than not to reject the proffered mercy but believingly accept it, yet even this is itself a gift of the Holy Ghost. For faith is not a matter (within the reach) of every one (2 Thess. iii. 2). The Father must draw us, as externally through the Word of Christ, so also internally through the Spirit, by whom He "impresses upon the heart" His Word. Man is in this process but mere material, which God lays hold of by His Word and transforms—mere clay in the hand of the potter. "We do not here choose nor do anything, but we are chosen, prepared, regenerated."[3] When, therefore, Luther exhorts men to believe, when he blames men themselves for their unbelief, when he gives the assurance that those who perseveringly seek and long for the Spirit of God shall be heard, etc., we dare not immediately infer that man is thus, after all, able to do something of himself. In view of the strict dogmatic utterances of Luther in regard to free will and divine predestination and universal agency, even such practical exhortations and assurances must be understood as capable of exercising any real influence upon the hearts of hearer or reader only through the will and power of God. We cannot even find any counten-

[1] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 68, 161 sqq., 190, 245 sq., 263 sq., 324 sq., 402, 416. Vol. II., p. 30. Erl. Ed., xxv, 128 sqq.; cf. xxiii, 12 sqq. Comm. ad Gal., i, 193 sq. Erl. Ed., iii, 367 sq. Jena, i, 554 b, sqq., 541. Op. Ex., xix, 101, 49; x, 127–129. Erl. Ed., xi, 151, 264 sqq.; xxxi, 183. Op. Ex., x, 135; xix, 45. Jena, i, 571.

[2] Supra, p. 350 sqq.

[3] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 83. Op. Ex., xviii, 318; xix, 121. Erl. Ed., xlv, 360; xlvii, 351 sq. Op. Ex., iii, 81; i, 106.

ance given in Luther's writings to the dogmatic conception, that although, indeed, the new good inclinations and impulses must come entirely from above, yet man is thereby enabled and summoned to decide voluntarily for himself whether he will or will not follow them. Even this following of good impulses appears, on the contrary, as we have seen, only as the result of divine agency, dealing with man as mere material. Yet, nevertheless, an unprejudiced view directed upon the divine injunctions given to man will always struggle against the interpretation according to which God Himself leaves to one class of hearers no possibility whatever of obeying, whilst to the other class not only granting the possibility, but by the exercise of His absolute power really assuring the actual manifestation of obedience. When Luther exhorts the hearer who is as yet unable to recognize the divine character of the Word of God to nevertheless hear it frequently, and assures him that, in that case, the hour will yet come when God shall impress it upon his heart—when he admonishes the weak brother to pray, according to Mk. ix. 24, for faith, which is by no means an easy thing, and which is the gift of God alone, comforting him with the assurance that God will approve our weakness, "if we only begin to believe and keep close to the Word,"[1] we feel ourselves driven to a dogmatic explanation of the kind suggested, *i. e.*, that, after the inclination toward God has been awakened in man, the desire for salvation enkindled, the germinating though weak faith implanted, then the perseverance or non-perseverance and the progress in the appropriation of grace or the falling from grace no longer depend only upon the absolute, hidden will of God, but, at the same time also, upon the personal decision of the individual himself. We should here recall, too, what was said in our Second Chapter concerning the general divine loving-will, and concerning the actual proffer of salvation to the recipients of the means of grace. But we must always bear in mind that any dogmatic solution of the problem which we may thus endeavor to reach is yet not to be regarded as furnished by Luther himself.

To designate the true faith, as thus effected by God through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men, Luther now employs also the scholastic term, "*fides infusa*" (infused faith), in contrast

[1] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 353 sq.; xvi, 207; cf. also xlv, 378.

with "*fides acquisita*," or a faith secured by man's own powers, which latter is a merely historical and not as yet a justifying faith, nor, indeed, any faith at all, in the true sense of the word. On the other hand, *such* a "*fides infusa*" as is, according to the view of the Scholastics, a mere dormant "*qualitas*," in which the believer does not as yet personally apply the message of salvation to himself, and which still requires to be given a positive form (*formirt werden*) by love, is, in the opinion of Luther, an empty nothing. In contrast with this, the "*fides acquisita*" is still at least something. The man who has the latter, *i. e.*, a historical faith, has, at all events, the voice of the Gospel within him, which at least constantly admonishes him to become a true believer.[1]

2. *The Justification Effected by Faith.*

EMBRACES ENTIRE NEW CONDITION—FORGIVENESS AND ACCEPTANCE —CONCEPTION OF GRACE—INFUSION OF CHRIST'S LIFE AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—REGENERATION—PASSIVE AND ACTIVE—SANCTIFICATION—SENSE OF PARDON—FAITH EFFECTIVE BECAUSE OF ITS OBJECT, CHRIST—DEPENDENCE OF BELIEVER THROUGH LIFE—GRACIOUS REWARDS.

This faith, therefore, *justifies*. It *alone* justifies. Appropriately and correctly may Rom. iii. 28 be accordingly, with Luther, translated: "Man is justified *alone* by faith," even though the four letters, "sola," do not stand in the passage; for such is the meaning of the apostle, who there absolutely excludes all works, so that nothing but faith remains.[2]

But what is meant precisely by this supremely important declaration, that faith *justifies?*

We find in Luther's conception of the idea here expressed the same leading elements uniformly included which he had from the beginning embraced in it.[3] It expresses nothing less than the *entire new condition* into which faith elevates him who exercises it, *i. e.*, that the believer has received the remission of sins, that God acknowledges him as righteous, and that he, through Christ

[1] Briefe, v, 377. Jena i, 538 b, sq., 541, 566, 570.

[2] Erl. Ed., lxv, 104, 108 sqq., 115 sqq.

[3] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 99 sq., 166 sq., 285 sq., 397 sq., 411 sq.

apprehended in his faith, has also in his own disposition, his purposes and aims, become new, pious and right. So far as any modification or progress is traceable in Luther's writings in the conception of this term, it is found—in harmony with remarks previously made—in the fact that the elements first named are given more distinct prominence and emphasis than were at first accorded them. As positively as it is maintained that man must, in justification, be also inwardly renewed by the Spirit, is the forgiveness of sins distinctly selected as the first element, and the position earnestly supported, that such renewal is in the beginning only incipient and incomplete, and that the individual experiencing it is still accepted as righteous only by virtue of the forgiving grace of God and through the imputation of the objective righteousness of Christ.

The words, "δικαιοῦν, *justificare*," Luther[1] commonly translates "make righteous"; in the passive voice, "become righteous." The term, "*rechtfertigen*" (justify), expresses also for him the same idea; since he regards "*rechtfertig*" (ready to face the Law) as identical in meaning with "*gerecht*" (righteous).[2] But this explanation of the terms employed affords us no specific information as to the relation of the constituent elements to one another. The question is: What did Luther understand precisely by this "making and becoming righteous"?

We are taught, for example, as follows: "We should learn that we *become righteous* and delivered from (our) sins *through forgiveness of sins*"; "It is necessary to attribute to faith justification (*justificationem*), or remission of sins"; "Christian righteousness is nothing else than alone forgiveness of sins." "Righteousness (*justitia*) is when sins are not observed, but ignored, condoned, and not reckoned (*reputantur*)."[3] Accordingly, our *becoming* righteous through faith means that God regards, declares, accounts, pronounces, etc., us as righteous. That is to say, He so accounts us just because He no longer looks upon that in us which conflicts with righteousness, but, on the contrary, looks only upon our faith, which lays hold upon the righteous Christ. Both expressions—the negative, "forgive," and the positive, "account as righteous," thus describe for Luther one and the

[1] Vol. I., p. 411. [2] Cf. Erl. Ed$_{2}$, x, 17; vii, 139; lii, 215; li, 355.

[3] Erl. Ed., v, 247; xxv, 76; xiv, 182. Jena i, 560 b; cf. 539 b. Op. Ex., xix, 43; xx, 191.

same act, and are frequently by him placed side by side. "Faith is our righteousness, for God desires to have all who have such faith in His Son accounted and regarded as righteous, pious and holy, and as having all sin and eternal life granted them." Thus, says he, every one who is justified is yet a sinner, but he is accounted as perfectly righteous through the forgiving, compassionate God. Through "*gratuitam imputationem*" we receive the heavenly, eternal righteousness.[1] So entirely does he, in the first of the above-cited passages,[2] place the righteous-making in the forgiveness, or imputation, that he bluntly declares, that Christian righteousness is not in the heart and soul of man, into which it is, according to the teaching of our opponents, supposed to have crept as a "*qualitas*"; but we become righteous simply through the forgiveness (of our sins).[3] But with this righteousness, salvation and every blessing are also imparted to the believer. God designs, as we have just heard, that he shall also have eternal life bestowed upon him. Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also already life and eternal blessedness. Yea, salvation and eternal blessedness consist precisely in the fact that we receive the forgiveness of sins and become partakers of the grace of God.[4]

With this conception of the process of salvation is intimately connected, further, the zeal of Luther for the proper sense of the word, "*grace*," in opposition to the scholastic employment of it. He is no longer willing to understand by it a "quality of the soul"—not even the inwardly-imparted gifts of the Holy Spirit—although he too had at first, following the prevalent usage, spoken of infused ("*infusa*" or "*infundenda*") grace, and of "grace, which is Christian love" (*caritas*). He distinguishes grace from the Spirit and His gifts, on the contrary, as being God's "clemency, or favor (*Huld oder Gunst*), which He bears toward us," by virtue of which He, first of all, forgives us our sins, and by which He is disposed to pour into us Christ and the Spirit with His gifts. Upon this grace, which forgives man's sins, and puts

[1] Jena, i, 543 b. Comm. ad Gal., i, 322. Op. Ex., iii, 299 sqq. Erl. Ed., xxiv, 325; lxv, 89. Comm. ad Gal., i, 14, 16.

[2] Erl. Ed., v, 267.

[3] Cf. Op. Ex., xix, 44 and *infra*.

[4] Erl. Ed., xxi, 20; xv, 385; cf. supra, p. 210.

him into the kingdom of divine mercy, is to follow the divine indwelling, John xiv. 23. This grace, in its objectivity, is thus the ground and the object of our trust; and through it we, though gifts and Spirit are yet imperfect within us, are already accounted entirely righteous before God.[1]

Yet never, according to Luther, shall forgiveness, or justification in the above sense of the word, be permitted to remain alone. Faith, since it trustfully apprehends Christ and His righteousness, *brings Him also truly into the heart;* and with Christ, all that belongs to Him becomes our own, and *Christ's righteousness and life* must so manifest themselves as actual and powerful as to flow out, like the waters of a fountain, into those who are partakers of them, so that "the same powers of righteousness and life work within us, just as if they had been implanted within us by Him from our birth." Through this grace, distinct from the Spirit, the *Spirit is* yet, as we have heard, *infused*. Yea, He dwells in believers, not only with His gifts, but "according to His essence" (*quoad essentiam suam*). Nor does He slumber in them, but He is constantly at work, lifting them up, guiding, strengthening, etc.[2] We are thus led also to the distinct announcement, that faith itself is not an inactive property (*otiosa qualitas*), but something living, active, etc. This it is by the power of the Spirit. It is living, in that it overcomes doubt, the assaults of the devil, death, etc. It is living, active, powerful, in that it entirely transforms us, begets us anew from God, crucifies the old Adam, makes us different persons in heart, courage, disposition and all our powers, and must constantly be engaged in active works.[3] So decidedly is faith, embracing Christ in itself, in the opinion of Luther, a living, independent power in man, that he, in opposition to those who saw in it an inactive, empty quality and "*fides informis*," describes it as an "efficacious and operative something (*quidditatem*), or, as it were, substance, or (as they say) substantial

[1] Op. Ex., xiv, 241. Supra, Vol. I., p. 166 sq., 324. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 123 sq.; xii, 285 sq. Jena, ii, 425 b. Op. Ex., xix, 109; cf. Briefe, v, 354, 377.

[2] Erl. Ed., xiv, 120. Comm. ad Gal., i, 244 sq.; ii, 134. Op. Ex., xix, 109 sq.

[3] Op. Ex., vii, 133. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 124 sq.; xiii, 267; xiv, 75; xv, 276 sq.; xviii, 127; xxviii, 383 sq. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 2. Op. Ex., iii, 107 sq. Briefe, iii, 375.

form."[1] And this entire inward transformation Luther now includes under the terms, "justification, making righteous, righteousness," whose primary conception we have found to lie in the first element above spoken of, *i. e.*, the forgiveness of sins. Having spoken of the righteousness of Christ as constituting an active force within us,[2] he then says further: Through the righteousness of Christ, which is outside of themselves, men become righteous in this way, *i. e.*, Christ touches them with His hand, and imparts to them His work and power for the obliteration of sin and death. To the process of "becoming righteous" belongs here, it will be observed, also the inward operation above spoken of. He speaks of an inward justification in spirit and heart through faith,[3] in which the heart is made upright, believing, pious and good, and from which must then flow an outward, public righteousness visible to men. He speaks of the former kind of righteousness as involving, that faith makes me acceptable to God, and that Christ therein puts the Holy Spirit into my heart, who makes me delight in all that is good. The *Smalcald Articles*, when treating of "becoming righteous," assert that we through faith receive a new, pure heart, and that God is willing for Christ's sake to regard us as righteous. "Justification" is even identified directly with regeneration: "Justification is a certain genuine regeneration into newness (of life), as John says; they who believe in His name, etc., are born of God." Luther expressly distinguishes, as the "two parts of justification": first, the grace revealed through Christ, *i. e.*, that God is reconciled to us, that sin can no more bring charge against us, and that the conscience has certainty in its trust in the mercy of God; secondly, the bestowal of the Spirit, with His gifts, which operate against the impurity of our spirit and flesh, promote our progress in the knowledge of God, etc. (In accordance with Luther's utterances elsewhere, we may add, that the assurance of the conscience here included in the first category is also an effect of the operation of the Holy Spirit.)[4] He now also speaks, with refer-

[1] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 322 sq. (with i, 191; ii, 133). Tischr., Först., i, 48 (Erl. Ed., lvii, 62).

[2] Erl. Ed., xiv, 120; cf. *supra*.

[3] Cf. the "inner" righteousness, Vol. I., p. 166.

[4] Erl. Ed., xiii, 238 sq.; xii, 89; xxv, 142; cf. also xiv, 240. Jena, 540 b. Op. Ex., xix, 48.

ence to the inner transformation of the individual which belongs to justification, of an incipient, a progressive, and a yet-to-be-hoped-for complete justification.[1]

The *New Birth*, to the consideration of which we are thus led in our investigation of the nature of justification, is effected, according to the views above cited, through faith. Luther commonly includes in his conception of it also the divinely-effected origination of faith itself. The Holy Spirit begets us anew from God, in that He begets faith, and thus new, godly thoughts, an entirely new heart, a new man, which must then, with continuous and ever-advancing crucifixion of the old man, maintain its character and grow, until finally the whole body shall also be renewed. He even, regarding the entire new life as already essentially included in faith, declares directly that the divine birth is nothing else than faith itself.[2]

We have already[3] called attention to Luther's designation (in a sermon of A. D. 1518) of the righteousness of the believer as twofold, *i. e.*, the foreign, essential righteousness appropriated in faith, and his own, unfolding itself in his life and works. Luther means to make the same discrimination when he now speaks of the "*justitia passiva*," which we receive by grace through faith from heaven, and of the "*justitia activa*," which falls within the sphere of morals and works. The former, says he, must precede. He who has this righteousness within (*intus*) descends then, as a fructifying rain falls upon the earth, from the heaven into which it has elevated him, accomplishing all possible good works. Thus we see here again[4] included in the first-named form of righteousness, or that of faith as involving the forgiveness of sins, also the implantation of the new ethical power or principle: for it is as one who already cherishes the latter within himself that the justified believer descends like the rain from heaven.[5] The righteousness of faith, as well as the other form, *i. e.*, the righteousness of works, Luther finds, for example, in the conception of righteousness, as mentioned in Ps. xlv. 7 (Thou lovest right-

[1] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 312. Jena, i, 538 b. Erl. Ed., xvi, 256 (following Rev. xxii, 11). Cf. Vol. I., pp. 167, 286.

[2] Erl. Ed., xlvi, 260 sqq., 267, 269 sq., 275 sqq.; xii, 386 sqq., 404 sqq.; x, 206 sq.; iv., 178, 184 sq.

[3] Vol. I., p. 286.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Cf. especially Comm. ad Gal., i, 13 sqq., 23.

eousness). The word, says he, is here to be understood "*generalissime*," as including alike both forms.[1]

Luther's conception of *Holiness* and *Sanctification* is in perfect accord with his view of justification and righteousness. Since the word "holy" signifies for him, in general, that which belongs to God, is dedicated to God, and set apart from all profane use,[2] Christians are in his view holy, first of all, through the blood of Christ; through the Word of grace, which acquits of every charge; through the faith in forgiving grace, which the Holy Spirit enkindles, etc. This is what is meant by the "sanctifying", of John xvii. 17, and by the "sanctifying" of the heart. We thus boast of a holiness which is outside of us (*extra nos*), not our work, a heavenly holiness (cf. the first, or essential, righteousness spoken of above). But Christians are holy, furthermore, in that they now, through the Spirit imparted to them, crucify the lusts of their flesh, live in accordance with the divine Word, and serve God in the various walks of Christian life which are sanctified by His Word. In this sense, holiness is progressive.[3]

Luther now, however, occasionally employs the word in the narrower sense, as denoting this continuous putting away of sin, in itself considered,[4] just as he understands by justification, in the narrower sense, the appropriation of the righteousness of faith, in itself considered.

The employment of this broad and comprehensive conception of righteousness and justification does not, however, by any means imply that the forgiveness of sins and the objective acceptance of man by God are, in consequence, allowed to lose their position and significance as the first and absolutely fundamental element. Luther is constantly reiterating the statements, that precisely in this element consists justification itself, and that in it is already involved the complete, true and essential righteousness.[5] Even when he so represents the new life (walk) and personal righteousness, or the righteousness of works, as pro-

[1] Op. Ex., xviii, 189.

[2] Erl. Ed., li, 361; xlv, 254. Op. Ex., xiv, 62; i, 99.

[3] Comm. ad Gal., iii, 34 sqq. Op. Ex., vii, 142 sq. Erl. Ed., iv, 68 sq.; viii, 143; xlix, 221 sq.

[4] Op. Ex., xix, 46. Erl. Ed., xli, 214.

[5] That conception of "justificatio," however, according to which it appears already in the "crucifixion" which precedes faith, no longer meets us.

ceeding from the righteousness of faith that the latter appears to already include in itself the new, inner life principle, he still, in his delineation of the righteousness of faith, gives the first place to the simple acceptance as righteous and the forgiveness of sins.[1] Just in this, indeed, does he find the inner life-principle necessarily involved, and hence, in this sense, maintains that where forgiveness is, there also is life. When he then speaks more definitely of the impartation of the Spirit which accompanies justification, he expressly represents the latter as following upon, and proceeding from, forgiveness.[2] But to however great an extent the believer may have appropriated the gifts of the Spirit, incipiently and actually begun a new moral life, or, in other words, have made advances in justification, yet Luther always insists with the greatest emphasis that he has still not attained in this direction that which he should attain, and that he is, accordingly, not yet righteous and pure, but is yet a sinner, and only engaged in the process of following after righteousness. Yet he is, at the same time, according to Luther, righteous before God just in so far as, on account of his faith, his sin and imperfection are *forgiven* him and true righteousness *imputed* to him. There is and remains a "*justitia remissionis peccatorum*." And *this* righteousness, or justification—*i. e.*, righteousness in the primary, or narrower sense, acceptance as righteous, forgiveness—appears always, whenever it exists, *i. e.*, wherever there is faith in Christ, as complete. It "comes not in parts, but in one heap." By virtue of it man is *entirely* righteous, according to both his person and his works.[3]

We must, finally, in the study of Luther's deliverances upon this general subject, discriminate between the forgiveness of sins itself and the *Joyous Exaltation of Spirit* in the recognition of such forgiveness as actually attained, which, in view of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, cannot fail to be experienced by the believer (*vid. seq.*), and which, in the above-cited division of justification into "two parts", must be included under the first part. Even among those who have experienced the grace of God—yea, and just precisely among such—is still experienced the sense of sin.

[1] Cf., e. g., Comm. ad Gal., i, 13 sqq.

[2] Op. Ex., xix, 109 sq., 48. Erl. Ed., xxv, 135.

[3] Erl. Ed., xi, 171; xlix, 276. Jena i, *543 b. Erl. Ed., vii, 253; xxv, 142; lxiii, 123 sq.

Sin alarms their consciences and makes their hearts tremble. Yea, God Himself often withdraws from His saints this joyous sense of the Holy Spirit's presence, and allows their hearts to feel, instead, as though they were abandoned by God and His grace, just as Christ Himself was alternately greatly exalted and deeply depressed in spirit. The believer shall, in such case, remember (know) that he has nevertheless the forgiveness of sins, and further, that it is just in the midst of the assaults of temptation, and through them, that God makes His grace operative. We dare not, in any event, imagine that true righteousness is a matter of feeling. The proper course is to believe in present forgiveness and grace without a feeling and against feeling.[1]

Thus are we to understand the righteousness which the Christian possesses by virtue of his faith. It is thus that he is justified.

But we must now, turning our attention directly upon the forgiveness, exercise of grace, or acceptance as righteous, of which so much has been said, scrutinize more carefully the position, that *it is precisely Faith by which the Christian secures* this.

We note clearly, first of all, in Luther's utterances, his direct contradiction of the opinion that man can in advance perform good works, and then, through these, contribute something to his justification. Before man can begin to fulfil the Law, or to love God and his neighbor, he must have the Spirit, and the latter comes only, according to Gal. iii. 2, through the hearing of faith.[2]

We find reiterated particularly the scriptural principle, that the tree must be good before the fruit can be good.

Luther rejects especially that conception of justifying faith, according to which it is only something else, which is added to such faith, namely, the love which is represented as "forming" (*gestaltende*) and "adorning" it, which is regarded as constituting the justifying element. Such, it will be remembered, was the scholastic doctrine of an "undeveloped faith" (*fides informis*) and a faith "developed by love" (*caritate formata*).[3] Even love itself is possible, according to Luther, only as man has already without it become, for Christ's sake, acceptable to God, free from the guilt of sin, or righteous, purely through faith. "If we have and believe the forgiveness of sins, then love follows."

[1] Cf. Vol. I., p. 180. Erl. Ed., xlv, 229 sq.; xii, 198 sq.; xlvii, 324 sq.; l, 62; xi, 20 sqq. Op. Ex., iii, 278 sq. Cf. supra, p. 430.

[2] Comm. ad Gal., i, 366 sqq.

[3] Vol. I., p. 99.

This, he holds, is also the meaning of Lk. vii. 47 (cf. 50). "Love is the fruit and consequence, not the ornament and supplement, of faith, the Spirit and righteousness." It is not true, as the Scholastics teach, that love gives to faith its living hue and its opulence (*Fülle*) : but, on the contrary, Christ, whom faith grasps, who is Himself present in this firm and heartfelt confidence, who is held by faith as a jewel is held in a ring—HE is the "Form which adorns and gives form to faith." [1]

On the other hand, whilst thus turning the thoughts of his readers away from that love, which, with its fruits, appears only as a result of faith, to fix them upon faith itself, Luther still, as formerly, frequently emphasizes the *ethical nature of faith* as being, in and of itself, a proper attitude and disposition toward God and the divine Law.[2] Just as unbelief is looked upon as a violation of the fundamental Commandment, and hence a fundamental sin,[3] so he regards faith as an obedience rendered to the first and fundamental Commandment of the Decalogue. It is for him the highest form of divine service. In contrast with the doing of works and the exercise of love, which cannot justify, Luther represents faith as the first and proper "doing" (*facere*). With "moral doing" (*facere morale*) he contrasts "doing with faith" (*fidele facere*). Here, says he, is the real sacrifice, in which man's own reason, which is the worst enemy of God, is offered to God in sacrifice. Here is rendered to God that which is His due, His glory and His divinity being acknowledged, in that He is regarded as the God who cares for us, answers our prayers, has compassion upon us, etc. And it is with faith as viewed in this aspect that Luther expressly connects justification. Faith, says he, justifies because it gives God the supreme glory, according to Rom. iv. 20. Contrasting it with the merit of works, upon which his opponents relied, he calls this faith the "proper work and merit by which God wishes to be glorified." It thus appears to be only as a supplementary element that to the value

[1] Jena, i, 565 b. Erl. Ed., viii, 117 sq.; vi, 344 sq., 349; xxxi, 345 sq. Comm. ad Gal., i, 191 sqq., 195, 235, 244.

[2] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 175 sq., 413 sq. ; and from earlier period, especially Erl. Ed., xx, 196 sqq. ; lxiii, 126; xvii, 117 ; and from later writings, Erl. Ed., v, 226; xxxiii, 309. Op. Ex., xviii, 118 sqq. ; particularly Comm. ad Gal., i, 366 sqq., 371, 379, 326–338. Erl. Ed., xlvii, 250 sqq.

[3] Supra, p. 345.

of this heartfelt faith in God and Christ, which must always, from the nature of the case, be imperfect and mingled with doubt and distrust, there is added the divine imputation of righteousness, for Christ's sake, when God, for the sake of Christ, in whom we have begun to believe, accounts our imperfect faith as perfect righteousness ("*ista duo perficiunt justitiam Christianam, scilicet fides in cordo—deinde quod Deus reputat istam imperfectam fidem ad justitiam perfectam propter Christum*," etc.). The question here arises: Is not faith thus made effectual as an exercise entirely of man's own, although, indeed, imperfect, and of itself insufficient? Is not human merit, in such a presentation of the matter, excluded only in so far as faith, which possesses such merit, is itself a gift of God? But Luther now again expressly rejects the conception in which, in the process of justification, faith comes into view as a work prescribed, or exacted, by the divine Law, such as love, obedience, etc. Righteousness, says he, is attributed to Abraham "not working but believing—but not to faith *as our work*, but on account of the thought of God (*cogitationem Dei*) which faith apprehends." It is to be obtained, not through our faith in itself, but "*alone through Christ*, and not otherwise." [1]

Passages such as those above cited are, however, in the writings of Luther by far overbalanced by such as present simply the *Object grasped by faith*—Christ as present to faith—as the ground of justification. Simply and alone upon Him, and not upon our own faith, does Luther bid us look when he would make us certain of our salvation. He has not, however, left us any more precise analysis or exposition of the relation of the elements of faith above noted to one another. We must content ourselves with having called attention to his actual utterances, bearing now in one, now in the other direction.

If we now return to the habitual formula of Luther, that faith justifies on account of its Object, we shall observe, as already indicated, that this object is described as being not only the sufferings, works, death, resurrection, ascension to the Father, and righteousness, or merit,[2] of Christ, but also, and particularly, the person of Christ itself and Christ, as Himself truly present

[1] Op. Ex., iii, 301. Erl. Ed., vii, 178. Tischr., Först., ii, 151. Erl. Ed., lviii, 353.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 414.

in faith and in the hearts of believers. But Christ is then, also, as has likewise been shown, livingly and effectively present in the heart with His power, His life and His righteousness. With Christ comes also the Holy Spirit to abide and work continually in the heart as the principle of a new moral course of life. Here, again, we may be inclined to ask: Is it not, according to this, taken into consideration, in forgiveness and gracious acceptance, that this new principle has been implanted, that Christ is present in the believer as the power of a new moral life, and that there is thus in the believer himself, at least in germ, a true, personal, practical righteousness? We raise this question, not only because certain modern dogmatic theories suggest it, but because some utterances of Luther himself lead us up to such a conception, and, indeed, almost force it upon our attention. We have already heard him declare:[1] "Faith justifies, because it secures in answer to prayer (*impetrat*) the spirit of love." Thus he says also, in the *Enarratio* of the Epistle and Gospel of John, A. D. 1521:[2] "The just man lives by faith. How so? Because faith in Christ at once (*mox*) receives the Holy Spirit, who sheds abroad love in our hearts"; and in a *Sermon* of the same year:[3] "Faith saves. Why? It brings with it the Spirit, who does all good works with love and delight," etc. Reference may also be made to the *Preface of the Commentary upon Romans*.[4] Must we not now interpret all the teachings of Luther in harmony with this? To this we must, despite the above language, reply in the negative; and in the fact, that such utterances no longer occur in his later writings, we recognize a further advance in the doctrinal position of the Reformer. Particularly must it be borne in mind that, according to all his more precise utterances, the impartation of the Spirit, however essentially he holds it to be connected with justification, is located *after* the forgiveness of sins—not as the ground, but as the result of the latter. He expressly rejects too, the idea, that we are justified "on account of future works of faith," although he represents works as flowing of necessity from faith. He expressly also, in his contest against the "*fides caritate formata*," whilst describing faith as the mother of love and of virtues in general, guards himself against giving any countenance

[1] Vol. I., p. 328.
[2] Jena, ii, 356 b.
[3] Erl. Ed., xx, 308.
[4] Ibid., lxiii, 122 sqq.

to the idea that the latter are therefore to be regarded as combined with faith in securing justification. Nor does he attribute justification to faith itself as the germ from which love and virtues spring, but he would have us ascribe righteousness alone to the mercy of Christ and His promise apprehended by faith. He teaches: "*That* faith, which apprehends Christ, not that which includes love, justifies." In commenting upon the declarations of Paul concerning faith working by love, Gal. v. 6, he says that Paul is here speaking, not of what faith is nor how it avails before God, not of justification in the sight of God, but of the Christian life, in which it is indeed true that faith must also work.[1] He employs this passage also, thus interpreted, in his condemnation of the "patched up" formula of compromise which had been presented at Regensburg in 1541 as a basis of agreement between the Roman Catholics and the evangelical party. The question, by what means man becomes righteous before God, is, he there maintains, entirely different from the question as to what the righteous man does. Before God nothing avails but His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ, he then proceeds to say, is apprehended through faith and embraced in the heart. We are called righteous before God for the sake of His Son, who dwells in our hearts.[2] Of peculiar interest for us at this point are two incidents in the intercourse of Luther with men associated with him in the work of the Reformation. Brentz had, in 1531, raised the question, whether faith does not justify, *inasmuch* as we receive through it the Law-fulfilling Spirit. To this, Melanchthon replied: We must, on the contrary, turn our glance entirely away from our own renewal to the promise and to Christ, etc. He says: "By faith alone are we righteous (*justi*), not because it is a root, as you write, but because it apprehends Christ, for whose sake we are accepted." Upon this point, he remarks, even Augustine, upon whom Brentz relies, does not yet teach the full truth. Luther adds to the manuscript of Melanchthon that he, too, conceives the matter as though there were no "quality" whatsoever in his heart called faith or love, but instead of this he places Christ, and says: "This is my righteousness, He is my quality and, as they say, my formal righteousness."

[1] Briefe, iv, 432. Op. Ex., iii, 305. Comm. ad Gal., i, 135; ii, 323 sq. Jena, i, 570, 565 b.

[2] Briefe, v, 353 sqq.

Nor does he regard Christ as a teacher or giver, but he would have Him Himself as the gift; as Christ does not say, "I give the way, the truth and the life," but "I am," etc. *In me*, says Luther, must He abide, live, speak, in order that I may be the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21), not in love, nor in subsequent gifts.[1] In the year 1536, Melanchthon himself requested Luther's opinion in regard to the doctrine of Augustine, that we ought to consider "ourselves to be righteous by faith, that is, by our newness of life" (*novitate*). He asks "whether you think that a man is righteous by this newness of life, or by the gratuitous imputation which is outside of us, and by faith, *i. e.*, the confidence which springs from the Word?" Luther replies: "Thus I think, and am fully persuaded and certain that this is the true sentiment of the Gospel and of the apostles, that we are righteous before God by gratuitous imputation alone." When Melanchthon further inquires, how the matter stands *after* regeneration—by what means Paul is after his regeneration acceptable to God (*i. e.*, whether it be not, after all, by the works now flowing from regeneration), Luther replies: "By no other thing, but alone by that regeneration through faith, by which he was made righteous, does he perpetually remain righteous and accepted." He means here, of course, that regeneration which is effected in the very act of becoming a believer (cf. *supra*, as to the conception of regeneration), and not the new and good life of the man himself, which appears only as a result of his faith.[2] These declarations of Luther, particularly that made in his reply to Brentz, set forth again, indeed, most impressively, that Christ, upon whom justifying faith directs its gaze, must also be at the same moment already in the heart, and that, too, already as a living and effectual power. An utterance from any other lips than those of Luther, associating the indwelling of Christ so immediately with faith as justifying, would scarcely have been approved by later orthodox theologians. And it might now still be asked, whether anything more is denied than simply that the actual unfolding of the Spirit of Christ in us, and our own new spiritual deportment before God, are taken into consideration as justifying. When the indwelling of Christ is thus insisted upon, does there

[1] Corp. Reform., ii, 501 sqq. Briefe, iv, 271.

[2] Tischr., Först., ii, 145 sqq. Erl. Ed., lviii, 347 sqq.

not come into view as justifying at least the fact that Christ, the objective Reconciler, is also, at the same time, the present, living germ of the then incipient new life-development? But the utterances of the later Luther do not justify us in any such interpretation—not even the opinion expressed to Brentz, if it be carefully compared with other declarations of the same period. Moreover, it is to be remembered that the aim of Luther in his declarations concerning justification is always a practical one, *i. e.*, the comforting and assuring of the consciences of believers; and this he finds unalterably based, however certainly Christ is held to be now *within them*, only upon the objective Christ and the Word of promise. The experience of the indwelling Christ is a variable one. The feeling in regard to Him changes, and the fruits which flow from it are always imperfect. In this sense, Luther says again: "Christ is not within me; I do not see Him bodily," etc.[1] The heart must look to Christ, sitting at the right hand of God and offered to us in the Word, in order to be sure of righteousness and salvation. The view of Luther may therefore be epitomized as follows: Faith, in order to obtain righteousness and the assurance of salvation, must look to Christ, as the objective Reconciler, presented to us in the Word, and must embrace (*schliessen*) Him in the heart, in order that forgiveness of sins may thus be effected for those who believe; and only then will Christ, embraced in the heart, prove effectual in them also as the author of a new moral life and deportment. From all the foregoing it may now be clearly understood how Luther could so earnestly insist, upon the one hand, that Christ, with His righteousness, must not remain outside of us, but be in us; and yet, upon the other hand, just as strenuously maintain that our righteousness before God must be and remain a foreign (not our own) righteousness, that it "is taken as something purely and entirely outside of us, and based upon Christ and His work," that the Christian is righteous "by a holiness from without (*extrinsica sanctitate*), that is, righteous by the mercy and grace of God," since God for Christ's sake forgives his sins.[2]

Purely through faith, therefore, is man justified, according to

[1] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 253.

[2] Jena, i, 543 b. Erl. Ed., iii, 424 sq.; xii, 118. Op. Ex., xix, 43 sqq.

Luther, before he can cherish love within his heart, or do works pleasing to God. And purely through faith, likewise, is the *man who already walks in the spirit of grace and regeneration*, and performs good works, to *continue to enjoy the forgiveness of sins* and the good pleasure of God.

We here again observe, that Luther in his later days entirely avoided the use of expressions such as he had at first employed, in which the new deportment of man himself was represented as contributing toward his justification. We refer to those in which he had previously ascribed an efficacy, in securing the forgiveness of the sin yet remaining in the regenerate, to their own zeal and spiritual progress, or to the beginning of purification already effected.[1] He now, upon the other hand, bases the continuous, as well as the original, acceptance as righteous simply upon the "foreign" righteousness of Christ and upon the faith which lays hold upon the latter. Of the purification already begun he declares, that it is accounted complete and perfect, not for its own sake, but because the Christian depends in faith upon the pardon-promising Word of God.[2] He denies particularly to the works and virtues which are now actually manifested in the lives of those who believe and have become righteous any validity of their own before God.

At all events, says Luther, the heart which has experienced the love of God must itself also necessarily cherish love to God. The believer must, as a new creature, perform works by a consequent and immutable necessity (*necessitate consequentiae seu immutabilitatis*), just as a living fruit-tree necessarily produces fruit, and as the sun shines by an inner necessity. Faith prepares the heart for the fulfilling of the Law, which is accomplished through love. In fact, faith is itself the doer, and love the deed. Since Christ lives in us through faith, good works can just as little be neglected, and are just as necessary, as faith itself. This is the meaning of Gal. v. 6, *i. e.*, we do not at all rightly believe unless the works of love follow.[3] It is, therefore, by the manifestation

[1] Vol. I., pp. 177 sq., 328, 356. Cf. also, Preface to Romans, in Erl. Ed., lxiii, 131.

[2] Erl. Ed., xlix, 276 sq.

[3] Tischr., ii, 149. Erl. Ed., lviii, 350; xlix, 348; viii, 61 sqq.; xiii, 240; xlix, 67 sq. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 324. Briefe, iii, 375. Jena, ii, 519.

of love that we must discover and prove where there is true faith in God and Christ. Only when we can say, before men and before God, that we have according to our ability done good in love, can we continue also in the joyous confidence of faith and appear before the judgment-seat. For those, on the other hand, who, without love and a life of innocence, boast of their faith and their baptism, conscience must, under the assaults of the devil, despair and faith fail; for the devil will say to them: "How can you boast of faith and of Christ? You have surely all your life-time given no evidence of it" (such faith and fellowship). Yea, thus must even the calling of the believer be made sure by the beginnings of the new creature manifested in works, and thus must faith itself be made ever stronger and more immovable (2 Pet. i. 8 and 1 John) through the evidence of faith furnished by works of love. Luther even in one passage, when commenting upon Matt. vi. 14 sq., associates the readiness to forgive our fellowmen, which is a feature of practical righteousness, with the sacraments, through which we attain assurance of grace and of the forgiveness of our sins. We may, says he, when doing such work under the impulse of (*aus*) the Word and the promise which God has attached to it, herein have a sure evidence that God is graciously inclined toward us; and from the consciousness of this willingness to forgive we may conclude that we do not do such work by nature, but have been already transformed by the grace of God. A faith which at the very last moment accepts Christ, without having the opportunity to engage in (good) works, Luther regards as not, indeed, impossible, but as very difficult.[1]

Yet justification itself must never under any circumstances be supposed to rest on the works or the love of the regenerate. On the contrary, Luther most strenuously insists, that sin yet clings to such and to every good work which they perform; that they can never by any means render satisfaction to the violated commandments of God; that their consciences always still condemn them, even when they have done good according to their ability, because they have failed in many more ways than they themselves know. Hence, faith alone can here deal with God, and works,

[1] Erl. Ed., xlix, 191 sqq.; xiii, 237 sq.; xix, 287 sq., 383 sqq., 402 sq.; xliii, 186 sqq. Jena, 1, 545 b. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 259 (where Luther discusses the high value of works, as against the teachings of the Anabaptists).

or love, dare not at all be regarded in the case. We have been told, indeed, that the regenerate may nevertheless glory "before God" in view of (*mit*) his well-doing; but Luther immediately qualifies this by the explanation that this glorying "before God" is allowable, and that God will Himself be a witness for such believers against all their enemies and the devil on the Day of Judgment, in order that they may have joyous boldness (1 John iv. 17)—but that this glorying does not avail "against God," or "with God," *i. e.*, "between Him and me alone." When the question is as to my relation to God Himself, or as to my ability to stand before Him, and not merely before the world and my enemies, then everything depends solely upon faith.[1] Luther compares the relation of faith and works to one another to that existing between the divine and the human natures of Christ. As Christ through His divine nature alone is Christ and Lord, but becomes tangible to us through the assumption of our flesh, so faith is justifying as "*fides absoluta seu abstracta*," and must become tangible in works as "*fides concreta, incarnata*."[2] To the inquiry of Melanchthon, whether the righteousness of works is necessary to salvation, he replies: "Not that they effect or secure (*impetrent*) salvation, but that they are associated with, or in the presence of (*praesentes seu coram*), the faith which secures it; just as I am necessarily associated with (*adero*) my salvation."[3] So little can the works of the regenerate man justify, that, on the contrary, as he is himself continuously righteous before God only through his faith and by virtue of the divine imputation, so also his virtues and works, defective in themselves and polluted with sin, are pleasing to God only on account of his faith.[4]

Yet the works of the believer, or his own right conduct, labor and endurance, do nevertheless, according to Luther, *receive some acknowledgment* from God. There are, that is to say, special rewards which God promises to the righteous for their

[1] Vol. I., pp. 286, 325 sq. Jena, i, 542. Op. Ex., i, 250. Erl. Ed., xix. 315 sqq., 66, 345; xxvi, 297; xii, 177 sq. Comm. ad Gal., i, 202 sq. Erl. Ed., xix, 387 sqq., 391.

[2] Briefe, vi, 432. Comm. ad Gal., i, 381 sqq.

[3] Tischr., ii, 151. Erl. Ed., lviii, 353.

[4] Tischr., ii, 150. Erl. Ed., lviii, 350 sq. Op. Ex., i, 81.

comfort and strengthening, in addition to the fact they are already, simply through their faith, in enjoyment of His grace, forgiveness and the kingdom of heaven. These are gifts, in part, for the life that is to come, but partly also for the present life. God can, for example, make the believer a great and shining light already in this world, and may, in view of his prayers and his good works, spare an entire nation, etc. And on the Day of Judgment, those who have suffered and toiled abundantly shall be more gloriously adorned than others, to shine as stars of peculiar brilliancy. Works, therefore, do not justify the individual, but they "incidentally glorify the individual (*personam*) with sure rewards." We recall the fact, that Luther accords even to the outward righteousness of the unregenerate a certain outward and earthly reward from the hand of God.[1] For the special blessings which fall to the lot of the righteous, he is willing to allow the use of the term, "merit" (*Verdienst*). In and of themselves, however, the works of the righteous can here also merit nothing, as they can in any event be acceptable to God only on account of faith and because they are performed in Christ. It is not on account of any worthiness of their own that they are so valuable as to secure the reward spoken of, but on account of the promise which God has graciously given to strengthen us. In addition to salvation itself, the grace of God and participation in the kingdom of heaven, this adornment with peculiar glory always appears as something coming from without, just as, in the securing of the fundamental blessings named, good works (although they must flow from faith) stand by the side of faith only as something external, contributing nothing to the significance of the latter in securing justification. All believers are also (although differing as one star differs from another star in glory) equally, in Luther's view, acceptable to God and loved by Him, since they are all in the same degree righteous in the one Christ.[2]

[1] Vol. I., p. 285. Supra, p. 356.

[2] Comm. ad Gal., i, 382. Erl. Ed., l, 181 sq.; xlix, 288 (where Luther speaks of "little crowns"); especially, xliii, 356-368 (on p. 361, the R. Cath. doctrine of "premium essentiale and accidentale"); lviii, 354. Tischr., ii, 152.

3. *The Life and Conduct of Man in the State of Grace.*

a. General View of the Life of the Believer on Earth.

PRESENT BLESSEDNESS—SIN STILL CLEAVES—DAILY REPENTANCE—TEMPTATIONS—INWARD JOY—ASSURANCE OF ACCEPTANCE.

Exercising a justifying faith in Christ, such as has been above described, believers are already really *in the enjoyment of the very highest blessing of salvation.* They are "righteous, living and blessed people," because they have Christ as their Lord.[1] This blessing, moreover, became their possession already in the baptism which they as children received. We have already learned from declarations of Luther in regard to infant baptism, that precisely such faith is implanted in children at their baptism by the power of the Holy Spirit. For a further discussion of this feature of the subject, we refer the reader to the following chapter. Thus, the entire subsequent faith of genuine Christians appears as only an unfolding and new enkindling of that which at their baptism already made them partakers of salvation, and every blessing which they in faith enjoy, as a possession which was really theirs from the beginning, but which is now merely newly apprehended.

Christians, says Luther, are already saved, so far as their inner life is concerned, in the new birth. The attainment of salvation (*das Seligwerden*) in the future, which the Scriptures promise to those who do good, signifies that their salvation (*Seligkeit:* blessedness) will be revealed. Yea, the life of a genuine Christian after his baptism is nothing more than a looking forward to the revelation of the blessedness which he already possesses.[2] There exists here, as we have learned, a true indwelling of Christ and of the divine Spirit. Christians are a temple of God, their hearts a throne of the supreme Majesty. They become "god-like" (*gottförmig*), "partakers of the divine nature"—even "deified" (*vergottet*). As the nature of God is eternal truth, righteousness, wisdom, life, peace, joy and delight—in short, everything that is good, so they also receive everything good—have eternal life, peace and joy, and are pure, righteous and

[1] Erl. Ed., xiv, 120.

[2] Ibid., vii, 174 sq., 165.

omnipotent against the devil, sin and death. Particularly do they now possess and manifest the divine nature, in so far as the latter consists in pure benevolence, kindness, etc. Thus they are *children of God.* They are so because they have been born of God. They are so in faith, which is itself the divine birth.[1] They are so in that they have, through faith, become heirs of all divine blessings (possessions). Thus they are even called by the names of God and Christ, being spoken of as "gods" (Ps. lxxxii. 6) and Christians. Since the believer accepts Christ, and Christ interposes *for him*, he dare even say: "I am Christ"; the righteousness, victory, life, etc., of Christ are his. Conversely, Christ will say of the sinner who clings entirely to Him: "I am this sinner." Self-righteous hypocrites, on the other hand, say in their hearts, "I am Christ," in a reprehensible and impious sense, since they ascribe to themselves that which belongs alone to God and Christ, and desire to be their own saviours and the saviours of others. Christians are in Christ also truly helpers and saviours of the world. They are gods in their relation to the world through love, in which they exercise their divine nature. They are kings and lords over all things, so that even the devil must, in truth, serve them. With and in these possessions and this dignity of Christian believers, we find already the fountain from which flows constantly, by an inner necessity, their moral activity among their fellowmen and other creatures about them. Devotedly they lavish their wealth upon others, just as the wealth of divine blessings has been through Christ lavished upon them.[2]

In this lofty and blessed state of grace *sin, indeed, still ever clings to the believer.* Its crucifixion has begun in baptism; but the old Adam is not yet on that account entirely dead, but there still remain many traces of his presence. The condition of the Christian is like that of the wounded man to whom the good Samaritan ministered; *i. e.*, his wounds are bound up, the oil of forgiveness has been poured upon them, but he has not been immediately restored to perfect health. Our sins will be perfectly healed only when we shall die. There yet remains, thus, the

[1] Cf. supra, p. 440.

[2] Supra, p. 428 sq., 367. Erl. Ed., xii, 285 sq.; vii, 159; l, 253; li, 219; xv, 238; xl, 129 sqq.; x, 203 sqq.; xv, 194. Comm. ad Gal., i, 247 sqq., 373 sq. Jena, ii, 523 b. Erl. Ed., xii, 287; xlix, 105 sq; xiv, 290; xv, 248; xxxiv, 197; xxxv, 133. Supra, Vol. I., p. 415; Vol. II., p. 324.

evil lust of original sin. This must, as is argued at length against Eck, and afterwards particularly in the *Confutatio rationis Latomianae*, even after baptism, in which forgiveness of it is bestowed, be still acknowledged as truly sin. For the principle must always be stoutly maintained, that sin is everything which is not in accordance with the divine Law. This sin is always in substance the same, even though differing in degree. A sinful character, moreover, still attaches even to all the good works which the Christian performs in the power of the Holy Spirit. He thus sins even in the doing of good, according to Eccl. vii. 20. Every good work may therefore even be called sin, since it certainly does not truly correspond with the commandments of God. But that which is yet sinful in the good works of the believer is, for Christ's sake, not now charged as sin against him. Sin in peculiar and general forms persists through every stage of life. We may even say that our life not only sins, but is sin itself. And the sense of sin is yet deeper in Christian people than in others; for the latter, living on in security, do not allow the thought of sin to trouble them.[1]

Under the consciousness of such persistent sin, the believer may yet always find comfort in the forgiveness which was bestowed upon him already in his baptism, which he continually enjoys in Christ, and for the appropriation of which in the future nothing more is required than faith in the Redeemer. Thus we may even, whilst saying on the one hand, "Every Christian has sin," also say, "No Christian has sin." But as, in view of this forgiveness, sin is already entirely blotted out, so must it also be continually more and more fully obliterated, in so far as the believer is inwardly cleansed from it. This the Holy Spirit desires to do. He must still daily cleanse the wounds, as without His care we would again become corrupt. To this same end, also, God works upon us, particularly through mortifications and sufferings of various kinds. It is, moreover, for the very purpose of enabling us to forsake sin and lead a better life that our sins have been remitted and we ourselves taken into the divine favor.

The *repentance* of the Christian must therefore continue until

[1] Erl. Ed., xvi, 141; xv, 50 sq.; iii, 357. Op. Ex., x, 193. Vol. I., p. 325, sq.; Vol. II., p. 348. Jena, ii, 406 sqq. Vol. I., pp. 177 sq., 286 sq. Erl. Ed, xxiv, 134 sqq.; xxv, 142. Op. Ex., xxii, 404 sq. Comm. ad Gal., i, 275 sq. Erl. Ed., iii, 307.

his death, since he has occasion throughout his whole life to reproach himself on account of the sin yet remaining in his flesh. The work of baptism must be carried still further, and continuously, in a daily cleansing (sweeping out) and a continual decline of sin. This, too, belongs to the idea and to the nature of the holiness which distinguishes believers. They are called a holy nation, on account of the Holy Spirit, who daily sanctifies them, not only through the forgiveness of sins secured for them by Christ, but also through the cleansing and slaying of remaining sin. To this condition Christians can actually attain, and they do really attain to it, if they only do not themselves wantonly devote themselves again to sin. The "head and life of sin" are slain already in conversion and baptism. True Christians, however sin may yet stir within them, are therefore no longer subject to it, but rule over it. Whenever it stirs, they stop to reflect, recall the divine Word, strengthen their resolution by their faith in the forgiveness granted them, and thus resist the sin. Their condition is like that of ancient Israel, when the kings of Canaan had all been slain, and there were left to annoy them only the conquered and discontented remnant of the Canaanites. Whereas the non-Christian lives under the bondage (in the prison) of sin, the Christian has yet to do only with a captive sin. Christ has fettered it. that it may no longer impel or entice the believer to evil; and if it now seeks to entice him, he says: You pipe very sweetly for me, and would like me to do evil, etc., but I propose to trample all such things under my feet. The regenerate man is therefore still called "flesh," but only in view of the remnants of the flesh which still war within him against the first-fruits of the Spirit.[1] And as sin must be ever more and more fully driven out, so must the forces and virtues of the Spirit continually gain in strength. The gifts of the Holy Spirit can, from their very nature, never rest in repose. They increase continually in those who use them aright, or, when misused, continually diminish. It is in this sense that we are to understand the words of the Saviour: "To him that hath shall be given." Thus the Christian life as a whole is a constant activity—a constant progress—from

[1] Vol. I., p. 395. Op. Ex., xix., 43. Erl. Ed., xviii, 235 sq.; xvi, 141, 103. Vol. I., pp. 226 sq., 351 sq. Erl. Ed., xxv, 135; xvi, 104 sq. Vol. I., p. 397. Erl. Ed., xxv, 353 sq. Supra, p. 441. Erl. Ed., ix, 151 sq., 170; xlvii, 48. Jena, ii, 418 b. Erl. Ed., iv, 29. Jena, iii, 219 b.

vices to virtues and from one virtue to another. He who is not always engaged in such a course of advancement is no Christian. The life of the believer is not a fixed condition (*Wesen*), but a becoming (*ein Werden*). "*Christianus non est in facto, sed in fieri.*" In one view of his life, he is, it is true, already in heaven. Just because he strives to enter it, God regards him as though he were already there. His name is recorded among the citizens of heaven, and he has his walk and conversation there in prayer, faith, the divine Word, the sacraments, etc. But, regarded from another point of view, he is still only striving to enter heaven, and he who thinks himself already there shall never enter. "The conclusion of the matter is, that we must go forward, and not stand still, nor lie down and snore." [1]

God works also, as we have learned, especially through *crosses and sufferings* for the purification and spiritual advancement of His people. This brings to our view again the "penalty" (*Pein*) which, in connection with repentance, must continue until death, and which God still imposes upon true believers.[2] Under this heading are to be classed particularly those *inward assaults of temptation* in which the Christian is often made to feel as though the grace of God had forsaken him. The face of God is turned away from him. He feels himself abandoned of God. He beholds naught but wrath and terrors. He is, according to the emotions of his heart, actually in death and in hell.[3] This is the heaviest "penalty," and this, too, the sorest temptation. The spirit of impious murmuring is aroused in his heart, so that he feels angry with God for not giving him deliverance. It is the devil who brings him into this terrible condition by hurling fiery darts into his heart; but it is God who sends such trials through the agency of the devil.[4] Under such pains and conflicts Luther had himself groaned. In the endurance of them, the great saints, Abraham, Jacob, Job, David and Paul, were compelled to lead the way. Christ tasted them to the very dregs.[5] That we yet experience them is a result of our sins. We feel therein the divine wrath, which is visited only upon sin. The assaults of Satan derive their power from the Law, which discovers to us our present sins. Even Christ suffered thus also under the burden

[1] Briefe, i, 487. Erl. Ed., xxiv, 73; xlvi, 156. Comm. ad Gal., iii. 315. Jena, iv, 343.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 241, 252. [3] Ibid., p. 58. [4] Supra, p. 290 sqq. [5] Ibid., p. 402 sq.

of sins, inasmuch as He had taken ours upon Himself. All this must, however, not be understood as implying that those who are most grievously assailed by such temptations are therefore to be considered as the greatest sinners, nor that the magnitude of these spiritual trials in any case would justify the conclusion that the general status of the believer thus assailed must at least be peculiar low and weak. On the contrary, it has been already declared that it is only by the Christian, or regenerate man, that sin is properly realized. It is precisely those Christians who have already attained a high standard of Christian character, *i. e.*, the "lofty saints of God," who are, in the providence of God, most frequently assailed, alarmed and filled with fears. "It befalls only such as already have a strong faith and spirit, leading also a blameless life, doing much good and enduring much, so that they have no cause to fear the face of man." Others could not endure such cuffs.

But why does God impose upon believers of this class, and upon them only, such special trials? Because they, too, need to be put to the test by terrors and distress, to prove whether they really believe and love. It is particularly necessary for them to be guarded against presumption, and frequently most profoundly humiliated, in order that, possessing as they do a peculiar measure of divine grace and blessing, they may not again learn to depend upon themselves. There must yet be thoroughly slain within them their own righteousness, the flesh, and their own reason. They must constantly learn anew and more thoroughly to seek real comfort only in Christ, His Word and the sacraments: and through the temptations which they thus endure God will grant them the greater courage and strength. They thus learn, also, to discover and experience the presence of the Spirit within, and then only become really full of the Spirit. Finally, it is also as an example for others that God permits them to pass through such trying experiences—as a warning for the unconcerned and impenitent, who may be thus led to consider how they could endure the trial if such distress were to befall them; and as a consolation for other distressed consciences, who thus see that God has similarly afflicted even the best saints. God will, moreover, grant His saints all the assistance which they may need to endure all such assaults. Christ has made these sufferings harmless, and even beneficial for them. God does not suffer His own

to be tempted above what they are able to bear (1 Cor. x. 13). Christ will come again to them, and cause His light to arise upon them. They shall now learn from their own experience how powerful is He, the Vanquisher of sin and death. Thus they are to be thoroughly convinced that, even when they are oppressed with the sense of divine wrath and of abandonment by God, His grace is still unrecalled, and that God, in truth, is especially present with them in these very trials—that they are being chastened in mercy.[1] We have already remarked that Luther would not have us, in view of such considerations, call in question the reality of the divine wrath.[2] This wrath is actually visited upon them, inasmuch as they still are sinful. But the profoundest sentiment underlying the disposition and dealings of God with them, as those whom He has accepted as members of Christ, is still, although they now for a season do not realize it, His burning love. He is doing His "strange work," in order thereby to accomplish His "own work." They should meanwhile, even without feeling, if need be, cling to His Word of grace. And although, in other respects, they are just like lost sinners, they should still, just as God is still graciously inclined toward them, likewise also "maintain kindly feelings (*Gunst*) toward God," and be careful only that they do not forget to render praise and glory to Him. They may and should thus confront the devil with the bold assertion: "After all, it is not death and wrath; after all, it is paternal discipline." Thus they may, without long parley, banish many distressing thoughts, just as we allow the birds to do no more than fly over our heads.[3]

We are now in a position to understand without difficulty the utterances of Luther concerning the *blissful feelings* which mark the life of the true believer—in how far they properly belong to Christian life, and how far, on the other hand, we must renounce them, and, in direct opposition to our own feelings, hold fast to our faith in the grace of God.[4] We have been told [5] that faith must feel the truth of the divine Word. Our own heart and

[1] Supra, p. 402 sq. [2] Supra, p. 290 sqq.

[3] Cf., besides a multitude of similar utterances, especially in the letters of the Reformer, Op. Ex., xvi, 249 sqq., 305 sq.; xvii, 50 sqq., 57; iii, 277–284; ix, 90–99. Erl. Ed., xi, 19 sqq.; ix 90 sqq.; xxxix, 44 sqq.; xxxiv, 201 sqq.; xxxvii, 350 sq.; xlix, 194 sqq.; xli, 68; xix, 401. Supra, p. 336.

[4] Supra, pp. 430, 443. [5] Ibid., p. 430.

conscience must feel that we are also numbered among the sinful, who, as such, can be saved only by grace. Enlightened and enflamed by the Holy Spirit, we must feel how God loved the world and gave His own Son. And, finally, every separate individual must feel also the grace and forgiveness which have been individually bestowed upon him. Christ, the Good Samaritan, pours upon me the oil of His grace, so that I feel that His strong right arm is beneath me. This gives me an inner sense of supreme happiness. Every one must examine himself, and observe whether he also feels the Holy Spirit, and experiences in himself the voice of the Spirit, crying Abba, Father. He must be joyously, and without wavering, assured in his conscience of his adoption and his salvation. Even though there be yet a strife within, since he experiences God also as an angry Judge, yet this child-like confidence must at length prove triumphant. We then, because thus highly esteeming the Word of God, feel also the presence of Christ and of the holy angels in our hearts. And just because our heart, enflamed by the Spirit, feels the love of God, it then itself begins to love. We must know and experience also, in regard to our own faith, that it is a faith awakened within us by God. We must feel it, also, in that it manifests itself in our life.[1] Nevertheless, it still remains true, that, just as soon as faith in the objective Word of forgiveness is awakened by the Spirit, who makes the preaching of the Word efficacious, we have really made forgiveness our own, even though we do not then at once, nor at all times, enjoy the blissful feeling of personal forgiveness.[2] Indeed, in the spiritual temptations above spoken of, the recipient of grace must experience directly the opposite. Of the condition of such a soul Luther speaks with very special earnestness for the instruction and encouragement of believers. In such a case, he asserts, we should believe even without feeling, and in spite of that which is felt at the time. To this extent, faith is "insensibility." The believer must here, without murmuring, be content to know that God is good, even though he should never experience that goodness. He must not judge according to his own feeling, but simply hold himself to the Word and cling to it. He

[1] Briefe, iii, 355. Erl. Ed., xvi, 74; xiv, 16 sq.; vii, 275, 326; xii, 260; xlvi, 163; xxix, 334; xii, 250 sq.; xi, 185; xii, 260; xvi, 74; xix, 403. Briefe, vi, 20.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 443; Vol. I., p. 180 sq.

must thus, even when he most deeply feels his sins, yet say: I have the forgiveness of my sins. He must look only upon Christ, and, at least in weakness, believe in Him, and hold to Him, who says: "Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee."[1] The first-cited utterances of Luther, in regard to the *origination* of faith in an awakened state of the heart and feelings, are not contradicted by the views here presented. He promises to the believer, after such assaults shall have been endured, and through their very instrumentality, more exalted experience of blessedness and new and firmer assurance of acceptance. Those who endure shall *feel* the comfort of divine love and certainty shed abroad in (poured into) their hearts.[2] To the expression above quoted, "even though he should *never* experience the goodness of God," he at once adds, "which is, however, impossible."[3] The child-like confidence must, as we have heard, at length prove triumphant.

In harmony with all the above is the reply which Luther gives to the question, *Whether and how the Christian*, when living in the state of grace, *may and should be certain of this grace, and hence of His eternal salvation.* Luther is horrified that the Pope "should have entirely prohibited the certainty and assurance of divine grace."[4] That God is graciously disposed toward me, as a believer, is already made perfectly certain by the very fact, that He graciously offers to me in Christ forgiveness and life, and makes this for me dependent upon nothing else whatsoever but simply upon my faith. In connection with faith, all my works are also pleasing in His sight—as proper, good and Christian fruits. And when He Himself desires me to believe in Him and in His Word, that which He would have me believe is precisely this—that I have in Him a gracious God, and that I, with my works, am an object of His good pleasure. I am to believe that Christ has suffered for us. I am to lay hold with firm confidence upon the Word of the Gospel. I am particularly to be certain that the word of absolution, which pledges forgiveness to me individually, is the Word of God.[5] I am to be fully assured

[1] Erl. Ed., i, 62; xii, 271 sq.; xlv, 229 sq. Op. Ex., xvi, 280. Briefe, iii, 532 sq. Erl. Ed., xii, 270, 308 sq.; xiv, 270; xlvii, 324 sq.; xi, 198 sq.

[2] Erl. Ed., xii, 281, 299; xiv, 220; xlix, 196 sqq. [3] Ibid., xlv, 230.

[4] Vol. I., p. 53.

[5] Ibid., p. 259 sqq. For further expansion of this thought, see the following chapter.

that, since I am now in Christ and cleansed from sin by faith, my life is also pleasing to God. Moreover, of the fact that I so believe, I may and should now be certain. Luther does not discountenance, but even encourages, this reflection of the Christian consciousness upon its own condition and its own faith. He quotes with approval the saying of Augustine: "Any one sees it is faith very certainly, if he has any." Similarly, I should also be entirely certain that I have the Holy Spirit. In support of the position that the Christian may and should be certain of this, he appeals to the "inner witness" of which Paul speaks in Gal. iv. 6. He teaches, further, that we may infer our possession of the Spirit from the facts, that we now gladly hear of Christ, thank Him, acknowledge Him in our words and works, perform our duty cheerfully, no longer find pleasure in sin, etc.[1]

But we must now again take into consideration the spiritual temptations and infirmities which beset especially the saints of God. Under stress of these, we feel, indeed, only an extremely weak faith within us.[2] The Spirit still, assuredly, intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered; but we hear no longer the voice of the Spirit, and it seems to us that our groaning cannot pierce the clouds. Here again Luther reminds those thus sorely tempted, that they still gladly hear the Word, desire the spread of the Gospel, etc.; and he adds, we still feel, to some degree, our own weak groaning of spirit. But here, too, is again presented most earnestly, as of the first importance, the admonition that we simply lay hold directly upon the objective Word of grace. We have here, says he, the Word alone. Just because we lay hold upon it, we groan in spirit. We must not look upon our own imperfection, but upon the God Himself who extends to us the promise, and upon the Mediator, Christ. He refers us, further, to the power of the keys, to the sacraments, and, in general, to the countless evidences of loving-kindness which God has lavished upon us. Thus, amid all assaults of temptation, there yet stands fast for us the certainty of salvation; and we should, therefore, also ever seek to rise again to a firm and joyous personal assurance of it.[3]

[1] Cf., supra, p. 451. [2] Cf., supra, p. 428.

[3] Cf., particularly Comm. ad Gal., ii, 161–181. Further, e. g., Op. Ex., xvi, 197 sq.; xiv, 242; xi, 295. Erl. Ed., vii, 98; xliv, 123 sqq.; xlix, 284 sq.; xxxi, 286.

The words of Eccl. ix. 1, to which[1] the Papists appealed: "No man knoweth whether he is worthy of love or hatred," Luther had, in the first edition of the *Church Postils*,[2] still explained as meaning that it is, at all events, uncertain at least whether any man will in the future be worthy of grace, *i. e.*, whether he will endure under the assaults of temptation. He afterwards[3] no longer regards them as referring at all to the love or favor of God toward us, but to the gratitude or ingratitude which we have to expect from the world. "Although one may have done all things as well as possible, he yet does not know whether he may, by this, his diligence and fidelity, gain the hatred or the favor of his fellowmen." Whether the Christian, who may and should be now certain of his gracious state, shall continue in Christ, and thus also in grace, remains, indeed, according to Luther, an open question: for he who now standeth must always take heed lest he fall.[4] Although the Christian should be sure that he is now a child of God and a partaker of salvation, it is yet uncertain and a matter for serious concern whether he shall remain a child and maintain his position, and hence he must yet ever walk in fear. This declaration is maintained even in the later editions of the *Church Postils*, although they in the same section omit the original comment upon Eccl. ix. 1.[5] Yet the Christian should still, according to Luther, cherish a firm confidence that God, so far as the eternal salvation of the believer depends upon Him, desires that it be secured in Christ. If he is nevertheless finally lost, he must regard it as entirely his own fault, because he has failed to abide with Christ and secure ever renewed forgiveness in the Word of His grace. To the question, in how far the thought of a foreknowledge of God, an eternal predestination, an absolute, arbitrary divine will, lying concealed behind the Word of grace and withholding from us future assistance, might still disturb the confident outlook of the believer toward the future and the end of life, we have already heard the habitual reply of Luther. It appeared to him impossible to remove the difficulties which reason here suggests. But, in his practical admonitions, he sought to show how one may and

[1] Vol. I., p. 53.
[2] Erl. Ed., vii, 243, note.
[3] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 178 sq.
[4] Infra, p. 465 sqq.
[5] Briefe, ii, 276 sq. Erl. Ed., vii, 243.

should, without the officious intermeddling of reason, in direct apprehension of Christ and His means of grace, be, until the very end of life, sure of his predestination and eternal salvation.

We have thus reviewed, in a general way, the course of life which distinguishes the baptized, believing Christian. We must now examine more carefully the relation in which such a life continues to stand toward sin; and then, still further, must observe the postive moral conduct, in which its new inner character must be manifested and developed.

b. Life of the Believer in its Relation to Sin.

Sin of Believers—Sins of Weakness and of Deliberation—Sin against the Holy Ghost—Triumphant Experience of Grace.

Sin yet clings to the Christian believer. Not only do evil lusts, which he can by the power of the Spirit withstand, yet stir within him and pollute even the fruits borne by the new life which springs from fellowship with Christ; but, despite the presence of the Holy Spirit, he yet often falls into sin. He would not fall if he would always obey the Spirit; but that is impossible for him, since the devil is too strong, the world too evil, and our flesh and blood too weak.[1]

Every sin, moreover, which the Christian commits after becoming a believer is *truly sin*. God hates it. Every such sin is, in its actual character, a mortal sin. Though one may, indeed, be greater than another, yet even the lighter offences are too great and grievous for us to bear. In truth, we cannot sufficiently comprehend the magnitude of any sin. We should be utterly unable to endure them, if we were to properly see and feel their enormity. Our consolation must always be found in the grace of God alone; and the difference between venial and mortal sins lies not in the different nature (*Substanz*) of the deeds themselves, but in difference in the persons committing them, since forgiveness is granted to him who believes on Christ.[2]

Viewed in the light of their origin, the sins which are still committed by the regenerate are of two kinds. The first class are

[1] Erl. Ed., iv, 72 sq.

[2] Comm. ad Gal, iii, 24 sq. Erl. Ed., iii, 74; xlvi, 120.

those in which one is *in his weakness suddenly overtaken and overpowered by evil*, so that he allows a profane oath to escape his lips, or commits some other wrong deed; or that, at least, some sinful passion rises in his heart, such as thirst for revenge upon one who has injured him. Sins which originate in such sudden provocations, and by which we are thus overtaken, are "sins of ignorance." They do not obliterate faith. The believer at once struggles against such sins, repents of them, and finds in faith forgiveness. The case is different if he *knowingly and voluntarily, with an evil purpose, does wrong and acts against God*, as, *e. g.*, in the committing of adultery. We are every day overtaken by sins of the first class; but, according to Luther, the Christian is yet always liable to be betrayed into sins of the second class also. It is noticeable, indeed, that Luther's portraiture of these two classes of sins is somewhat vacillating. We find him, *e. g.*, at one time[1] including David's adultery among the sins committed in ignorance, inasmuch as David, although conscious, indeed, of the wrong that he was committing, yet, impelled by the devil and evil lust, did not properly consider the character of the deed. The distinction between such sins and the daily involuntary sinful impulses is always, however, clearly maintained. When sins of the second class are committed, the Holy Spirit departs from the fallen Christian; for He cannot abide where the devil dwells. The unfaithful Christian falls again under the wrath of God. He remains, if he be not again uplifted, under eternal condemnation. Nor dare we say in such a case: No fall can in any event injure him who has once been chosen of God, but he remains always in (the state of) grace. On the contrary, we must here again look entirely away from the mystery of the eternal election, and hold simply to the Word of God, in which He beyond all question reproves all sins. It is enough for us to know that he who finally perseveres in repentance and faith is certainly one of the elect. Luther maintains this position with great earnestness, in opposition to the reckless spirits then so numerous, who held that no sin could further injure him who had once become a believer in Christ, or that, if one should sin after his profession of faith, it would prove that he did not really have the Holy Spirit or true faith. Yet, at the same time, he con-

[1] Erl. Ed., iii, 149. On the other hand, Briefe, v, 40-42.

stantly[1] re-asserts the principle, that faith itself is no longer present in and with sin voluntarily committed—maintaining this particularly in opposition to the Roman Catholic conception of faith. Faith, he insists, cannot exist where the Holy Spirit is no longer present—where there is no repentance, and hence also no forgiveness of sins, which faith always receives. Even a slight wound of the conscience may very easily cast away faith and the calling of God.[2]

But for sins of both kinds there still is, and remains, with Christ forgiveness. The unavoidable daily evil impulses and sins of infirmity are embraced in the "general (*gemeine*) forgiveness." They "vanish in the Lord's Prayer." As I daily commit such sins, I should also daily seek cleansing from them by recurring to my ever-valid baptism and by the use of God's Word, absolution, etc. But for sins of the second class also, a return is still possible—a return to repentance, to faith, to forgiveness. God then again fully accepts the one thus converted from his error. There is no measure nor limit to the divine kingdom of forgiveness. Luther emphatically rejects the opinion of the Novatians, that after baptism no mortal sin can be forgiven upon earth. He cites against them the doctrine of the power of the keys. The passages, Heb. x. 26 sq. and vi. 4 sq.,[3] upon which they rely, he interprets as merely declaring that he who, deserting Christ, seeks to find another way to heaven shall never reach his goal.[4]

We have already observed that Luther's conception of *mortal sin* is such as to leave the way still open for a return to the state of forgiveness. Sins of the second class above described are all regarded as mortal—"if any one with a kind of presumption, knowingly, deliberately, voluntarily offends and despises the threatenings of God." They are not, as yet, altogether the same as the sin against the Holy Ghost, of which we shall presently speak, although not far removed from it.[5] Elsewhere, he under-

[1] Vol. I., p. 327.

[2] Erl. Ed., xviii, 124 sq.; xix, 74; xliii, 111 sq. Briefe, v, 40 sqq. Erl. Ed., xxv, 135 sq. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 321. Erl. Ed., l, 58. Op. Ex., iv, 227 sq.

[3] Vid. p. 246 sq.

[4] Erl. Ed., xviii, 19; xliii, l. c., xxvii, 442; l, 406 sq.; xi, 267. Briefe, v, l. c. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 179, xviii, 237 sq.; xliv, 120 sqq.; 126 sq.

[5] Op. Ex., x, 360.

stands by mortal sin, more precisely, boasting of one's own righteousness in contrast with the mercy of God, yielding to despair under the sense of sin, and thus, in general, resistance of the grace of God—in such cases identifying it with the sin against the Holy Ghost. Yet even here he still admits the possibility of restoration, and interprets the language of 1 John v. 16, which releases from the obligation of prayer for mortal sins, as meaning only that we are not to implore God to graciously accept such persons in their sins, but to convert them again from the latter.[1] Finally, he declares—understanding now by "mortal sin" one actually leading to eternal destruction—that hatred of recognized truth is a sin unto death (1 John v.) and against the Holy Ghost, if one *persists* in such conscious sin, does not confess it, nor forsake it, nor implore forgiveness for it.[2]

The conception of mortal sin last presented, or, what is the same thing, the *sin against the Holy Ghost* in its most extreme and distinctive form, brings into view at length a sin for which there is no longer any prospect of forgiveness. We must, however, again discriminate between different conceptions of "the sin against the Holy Ghost" which occur in the writings of Luther. He regards it as, in general, a striving against grace, or against saving truth itself, in which it seeks to conceal its real character, and be accounted not as sin, but as an excellent good work.[3] Thus, as we have seen, prayer for the conversion of those who are guilty of the sin in this general form is not excluded. Under this general conception of the sin in question Luther even includes the unwilling commission of sin against the Holy Ghost, as in the case of Paul, who afterwards received such peculiar tokens of the divine favor. There is in such cases "a yet concealed Holy Ghost."[4] But then, again, the sin against the Holy Ghost is described as that in which the heart resists the illuminating rays of the Spirit which have penetrated it like a flash of lightning—resists the recognized truth and the work of divine grace, and, under all warnings given, becomes but the more hardened.[5] This is the special sin against the Holy Ghost, for which mortal sin, not in the wider sense of the term as em-

[1] Erl. Ed., xli, 346.
[2] Ibid., iii, 148.
[3] Ibid., p. 254; xxiii, 74.
[4] Ibid., xxiii, 74 sqq., 83.
[5] Ibid., 76–84.

ployed by Luther, but in the narrower sense last described, is a synonymous term. For this there is no longer forgiveness, just because the necessary subjective condition, *i. e.*, penitence and faith, does not exist, but the direct opposite. Of such sinners Luther even declares, not only that they *will not* repent, but that they *cannot;* and he then applies to them the above-cited passages from Hebrews.[1] He even counts them among those for whom, according to 1 John v., we are not required to pray. He hears, says he, that the hardened Papists are actually in this condition; and he has resolved to withhold his prayers in their behalf, since they are but thrown away upon them.[2] Upon the question, whether such as have already become true believers can yet fall into this worst of all sins, we find no direct nor complete expression of opinion in Luther's writings; but, in accordance with his general declarations as to the possibility of falling which still remains even in the case of such, we cannot but answer the question in the affirmative.

So seriously does Luther regard sin, even in the case of believers graciously accepted and rejoicing in their salvation. Even they must still feel it as a bitter reality. Ever anew must they take refuge in the grace of God alone, renouncing all claims of their own. They must, likewise, be ever willing to submit to the further inner cleansing of their lives from sin, and to the divine work of cleansing by means of crosses and spiritual temptations. But if we inquire what is the key-note in Luther's description of the present state of the true Christian, we shall find it to consist always and everywhere in the *joyous consciousness of grace*, which the believer already really experiences, and before whose radiance the depressing power of sin must, in every case, at length be vanquished. Of this he testifies most powerfully and boldly, particularly when it is his aim to snatch honest Christian brethren out of the gloom of spiritual distress. He exhorts such to find consolation in the reflection, that even a thousand sins, committed in one day, could not outweigh the value of the heavenly Paschal Lamb. He exhorts them especially to cast aside the scruples which lead them to make sin out of that which is not such in God's sight—foolish, empty sins, such as those with which

[1] Erl. Ed., xxiii, 81, 79.

[2] Ibid., p. 78 sq.; xxv, 3. Cf., also, reference to the Sacramentarians, supra, p. 189.

he had once [1] tormented himself. In this sense he could exclaim to a Melanchthon: "Be a sinner and sin bravely, but trust and rejoice more bravely in Christ, who is the Vanquisher of sin, death and the world." [2]

c. Positive Moral Deportment of the Believer in the Various Relations of Life.

ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD—GOVERNMENT OF THE BODY—TREATMENT OF FELLOWMEN—MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE—POLITICAL RELATIONS—CIVIL GOVERNMENT A HIERARCHY—TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED—PRESERVATION OF PEACE—CHRISTIANS MAY PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT—ITS SPHERE—MONARCHICAL FORM—RIGHT OF RESISTANCE—DUTY OF CLEMENCY—ENDURANCE OF WRONG—ESSENTIAL LIBERTY OF THE CHRISTIAN.

The true Christian has in his *Faith* a joyous confidence, a blessed experience and a power, which will sustain him in the midst of all the further strivings of sin within. Faith is now, and will remain, for him the unfailing source of his positive moral deportment.

The proper attitude of the heart, as placing its dependence directly upon God, appears to Luther to be already embraced in the conception of faith itself. Whereas the soul should be content with nothing less than the supreme Good, by whom it has been created and who is the source of its life, and should cling to Him, this clinging is nothing else than faith itself. It is just in faith, too, that due glory is given to God. As we call that a God from which we are to expect everything good, so to *have* a God is simply to trust and believe in Him from the heart.[3] But in immediate connection with this stands that *Love* in which I myself am also kindly and favorably disposed toward this good God, inasmuch as His love to me enkindles such a disposition in my heart. Thus my heart and inward feelings are to be entirely turned toward God, so that I accept with equal readiness whatsoever my God appoints for me. I am to be satisfied with His

[1] Vol. I., pp. 55, 69.

[2] Briefe, i, 36 sq. Cf., also, particularly Briefe, iv, 188.

[3] Erl. Ed., vii, 261; xxi, 35 sqq. Cf. supra, p. 285.

goodness, even when I do not feel it. In this faith and love I am then to obey and serve Him—not from fear of punishment, nor for the sake of the reward, although the promise of the reward which is to naturally follow is designed to assist in stimulating me and enflaming my desire for piety. I am permitted also to love created things, in so far as they have come from God and are good. But I dare not make them equal to God, nor depend upon them, but must, on the contrary, willingly renounce and cast from me everything else, if He desires it.[1] The *Fear of God* must also remain side by side with faith and love. It thus stands, according to Luther, just as in God holiness and punitive justice stand, side by side with love and mercy; or as the Law, which rebukes and warns against the sin yet remaining or again threatening to assert its power, stands side by side with the Gospel. The fear of God and confidence in Him are thus to stand together, in order that man may not become presumptuous and carnally secure. Spiritual trials are particularly designed to assist in the cultivation of such a disposition. And as we should do everything, according to Luther, to please God, from *love* to Him and *faith* in Him; so the heart, which prompts all our actions, should be at the same time a heart that fears God, accepts His Word as spoken with divine earnestness, and esteems it highly. There may and should here be cherished, at least side by side with thoughts of the divine promises, also thoughts of the threatenings and penalties of the divine Law. But the proper, Christian, filial fear is that in which we joyfully believe and hope, even in the midst of our fears, as we are exhorted in Ps. ii. 11: "Rejoice with trembling." But of course the Christian, when under the stress of spiritual temptations, must realize that even the sense of this inward joy has vanished.[2] We thus, with Luther, embrace all that is included in a proper bearing toward God in the three particulars: "We should fear, love and trust in God above all things."[3]

The relation and attitude of the believer toward God finds

[1] Erl. Ed., xiv, 4; xii, 260. Op. Ex., xiii, 144. Erl. Ed., xiv, 146, 6; xlv, 230. Supra, Vol. I., p. 138 sq. Erl. Ed., xiii, 240; xv, 469. Jena, ii, 343; cf., supra, p. 460.

[2] Ibid., xxi, 91 sq.; xi, 5. Op. Ex., xviii, 96, 103, 107 sq. Supra, Vol. I., p. 140.

[3] Ibid., xxi, 10.

most profound utterance in *Prayer*, in which his heart and soul[1] mount up to God, now in longing desire and aspiration, and again with praise and thanksgiving. In it are displayed, at the same time, the highest work and glory of the believer, *i. e.*, the dignity and power which belong to him, as against the entire world, in his relations with God. For in prayer all things are promised to him —deliverance from present and future misery, holiness, liberty, life, and, besides all this, the beggar's portion on the earth—the the common necessaries of life. Prayer is "the only omnipotent empress in human affairs." It is the quite peculiar and the chief work of Christan believers. They engage in it because the promise is attached to it, and because it is commanded. They practice it without ceasing, since, even when the lips do not move, the heart still throbs and beats as it silently breathes the Lord's Prayer, just as the heart and arteries throb constantly in the body. As they always desire to be nothing, and to be considered as of no worthiness except only through God's grace and in Christ, they, in prayer, also cast away all thought of self and depend alone upon the promise of grace, praying in Jesus' name alone. Hence it follows that they should not suffer themselves to be frightened into neglect of a proper approach to God by the sense of their own unworthiness or sinfulness.[2]

The entire deportment of the believer, thus depicted, in so far as it displays the attitude of his heart toward God, may be summarized in what Luther has said primarily of faith,[3] *i. e.*, that he "rises above himself to God." We must now also observe more closely how he "*descends beneath himself*," how he *deports himself in the relations of his earthly life and surroundings.*

The prescriptions of Luther for moral discipline and the *Governing of the Body and of the Flesh*[4] are chiefly negative in character, and have in view the continual crushing out and crucifixion

[1] Luther says (Op. Ex., xvii, 216) that prayer is not an ascending of the mind (mentis) but an uplifting of the soul (animæ). Unfortunately, the German version (Erl. Ed., xxxviii, 258) here translates "mens" by the word, "Herz." For the conception of the term, "heart," as used by Luther, see, on the other hand, Op. Ex., xix, 113. Erl. Ed., xiv, 4.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxi, 166. Op. Ex., xvii, 217. Erl. Ed., xxxviii, 366; xlix, 113–116. Briefe, v, 276, 443. Erl. Ed., xliii, 284; xxi, 100, 107; l, 114 sqq.

[3] Vol. I., p. 418.

[4] Cf. Vol. I., p. 415 sq.

of sin. It is to be observed that he still recognizes especially the practice of *fasting* as of great importance in its moral significance. Although he had long since rejected the ecclesiastically imposed fasts, as detrimental to liberty of conscience, and yet only children's, or lying, fasts, he yet advises Christians to fast often, in order that the body may be "tamed." But he considers a real fast to mean, that one willingly—whether or not required by necessity or his own resolution—deprives his body, or any one of the five senses, of a desired gratification and governs it, or when he denies himself sleep, leisure, or any kind of recreation. Such fasting does not necessarily, in his view, require an entire abstinence from meat or other kinds of food, but merely from such things as are not required by absolute necessity, in order that the body may be kept in subjection and in proper condition for work. This, says he, is indeed a fasting for which no general rules can be given, but which every one must impose upon himself in such measure as may, in his own judgment, be necessary. He admonishes every one especially to willingly accept all the crosses and sufferings which God Himself may lay upon him.[1] He regards it, further, as allowable, and even desirable, that the civil government should sometimes, in order to restrain the excesses of the common people and not allow them to eat up all that they have, prohibit the eating or sale of meat on certain days. But such a regulation he would consider a purely secular ordinance. He would approve also the observance of a general fast upon the days preceding the great festivals; but care must in such case be taken not to make such an observance an act of divine worship, as though we could thus merit anything at the hand of God. He recommends this, however, only as a means of external discipline and exercise for the young and simple, and discriminates carefully between everything of this character and that true Christian fasting of which Christ speaks, and which is a matter for the conscience of each individual.[2]

Upon the other hand, guided by the same general principle and the same fundamental conception of the Christian life,

[1] Erl. Ed., lxv, 128; xliii, 194 sqq.; 200 sq.; li, 15; xvii, 8 sq. Cf. in regard to Luther's own practice, Melanchthon's report in "Vitae Quatuor Reformatorum, p. 5.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxx, 406; xliii, 197 sq.

Luther would have the Christian, with faith in his deliverance through Christ and with joyous confidence in God, give even the body its *rights and all due honor*, and without any scruple enjoy the pleasures which he thus allows himself—as, for example, in matters of food, drink and clothing—only practicing proper moderation and each one observing the proprieties of his station. Particularly does he exhort those who are in spiritual distress and tempted to despondency to resort even to such worldly means of exciting and cheering up both body and soul, in order to defy and mock the devil, who is always trying to awaken scruples about harmless things. If the devil prohibits drinking, we may drink all the more freely, in the name of the Lord Jesus.[1] In particular, however earnestly he recommends the subjugation of the flesh, he will yet hear nothing of the obliteration of purely natural emotions, or of stoical apathy. And, however strictly he requires the renunciation, upon occasion, of even the closest natural ties, he yet esteems very highly, in opposition to the Satanic teachings under the Papacy and the monastic life, the natural affection for husband, wife, parents, etc. The pious, says he "retain the στοργεις or innate natural affections," because the Holy Spirit does not extinguish, but wonderfully reinforces, inflames and cherishes them.[2]

It will be in entire keeping with the general inner harmony of Luther's ethical views if we now, following still further the course of his *Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, turn to consider *how the Christian*, "descending beneath himself" in love, *Deports Himself toward his Neighbor*. Here Christ is always presented as the pattern, frequently with especial reference to Phil. ii. 6 sqq.[3] As Christ has given what is His to Christians, so they allow that which belongs to them, which they have received from and through Him, to overflow upon others. Their faith, indeed, and the blessings which it brings them, they cannot transfer to others; yet they pray for others that they may also thus put on Christ. It is an error to define love as only "wishing good to any one"; love is active, and displays its activity in serving others, comfort-

[1] Erl. Ed., xi, 39 sqq; viii, 290; xxxiv, 47 sq. Briefe, vi, 435. (In regard to dancing, see earlier expression in Op. Ex., xii, 177). Op. Ex., v, 81 sq. Briefe, iv, 188, 543 sq.

[2] Op. Ex., x, 167 sq., 234, 335 sq.

[3] Cf. Vol. I., p. 416 sq.; supra, pp. 365 sq., 374, 415.

ing the distressed, helping to the extent of its ability, devoting itself unselfishly with tongue, mouth, earthly possessions, body and life, etc. There is, indeed, a certain knowledge of it implanted in men by nature; but no believer even has as yet sufficiently considered or put into practice all that it involves. It really springs from the love of God and of Christ which we ourselves experience. The more fully we ourselves enjoy and appreciate the blessings of love, the more loving service do we render and the more love do we bestow upon our fellowmen. And it is just in the exercise of such love that Christians, as the followers of Christ, become like the God who, without ceasing, bestows upon the whole world all good things, and Christ besides. They become God-like, even gods, for their fellowmen.[1] So directly is this disposition towards our fellowmen involved in the very conception of faith itself, that he calls faith the doer and love the deed, or faith the doer who performs the works of love.[2] In this love he then regards all other virtues as included, and all good works likewise. Thus it is also the summary and fulfilment of the Law. Referring to the endless expansion of the Law in books and in religious and secular ordinances, etc., he demands that all such laws be, in any event, administered in accordance with the supreme law, rule and measure of love. Thus, he declares, the Scriptures also embrace all laws in that of love, and subordinate them to it.[3]

Luther would by no means assign to the *preaching of works*, as thus conceived, a subordinate place. "Both doctrines, that of faith and that of works, should be diligently taught and impressed, yet in such a way that each is kept within its own limits." "I would not," says he, "for the wealth of the whole world give up the trifling works that I may have done; for if I have done any good work, it was God who did it through me, and if God did it, what is the whole world in comparison with His work?" He held the first three Gospels as, from this point of view, superior to that of St. John.[4] But he nevertheless returns con-

[1] Cf. pp. 285 sq., 454 sq. Erl. Ed., xxvii, 195; vii, 159, 304 sq.; xix, 381, 396.

[2] Erl. Ed., viii, 63. Jena i, 553. Cf. supra, p. 450 sq.

[3] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 355. Erl. Ed., li, 284 sqq., 289, 292; viii, 50 sqq., 65 sqq., 53 sq.

[4] Comm ad Gal., iii, 5. Erl. Ed., lxiii, 295; xliii, 81. Cf. supra, p. 243.

stantly to the announcement of the fundamental principle, that works contribute nothing to the securing of eternal happiness. The Christian, in his state of blessedness, appears to him as complete in himself without works, just as Christ did not need to perform these for His own sake. They are necessary only because the Christian is yet living here in the flesh, from which he constantly longs to be transported entirely to that heaven to which he already in his real character belongs. The performance of works connected with our earthly life is contrasted with faith as is the flesh with the Spirit.[1]

If we are to follow out more fully, in its concrete expansion and analysis, the doctrine of Luther concerning the moral life of the believer upon earth, it will be necessary for us to classify his utterances in accordance with their relation to one or the other of the *three conditions*, *orders* or *spheres* of human life.

There are, says he, *three holy orders* (*Orden*), or *proper institutions* (*Stiften*) established by God (as opposed to the monastic orders humanly devised for the furtherance of holy living), *i. e.*, the *Priesthood*, *Marriage* and *Civil Government*. Above all three is the universal order of *Christian Love*. Of the last named we have just treated. Under the second of the special orders, Luther includes the entire economy of family life. In all three, men are to serve God. He who meets his obligations in these relations performs works that are, in the full sense of the word, holy in the sight of God. At the same time, it is through them that God administers His government over the world and the human race. Thus, to the order of the family belong parents and masters as those divinely commissioned to exercise authority, and children and servants as, in accordance with the divine will, rendering obedience. To the third order belong those bearing civil authority, together with the lands and people over whom they rule. The first order has to do with *spiritual* government through the Word; the other two, designated the "*ordinationes oeconomicae et politicae*," with temporal (*leibliches*) government and its external laws, power and penalties. But the special point upon which Luther insists, and which he maintains against all opposition, was that both the latter orders were also instituted and hallowed by God. They are, therefore, "hierarchies," as

[1] Op. Ex., xx, 77.

well as the first. They are divine institutions, first of all, by virtue of their original establishment. God ordained them and declared them good, just as He did in the case of the sun and moon and the whole order of creation. Still further, God gave to them, in addition to the positon assured to them by His direct appointment, His sanctifying Word. Thus He Himself instructed Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, and gave commandment that children should honor their parents; and He similarly authorized the exercise of authority over temporal things in general, in the words of Gen. i. 28: "Have dominion," etc. He confirms the authority of secular government still further in Rom. xiii. 1 sqq. By means of all three orders God desires particularly to combat all that is evil; and they remain "hierarchies" by virtue of the position and character which He has assigned to them, although never so many evil men should share in their administration.[1]

Of the spiritual orders and government, we shall treat at large when reviewing the doctrine concerning the Church, in our eighth chapter. To present in detail all the teachings of Luther bearing upon the subject of marriage and civil government would carry us far beyond the limits of our present undertaking.[2] We must content ourselves, therefore, with a brief presentation of the leading principles which he asserted in respect to the latter orders.

Luther had already vigorously defended and lauded the dignity and sanctity of *Marriage* before he ever thought of sanctioning the renunciation of the monastic vow.[3] How strongly we are inclined toward this state, in itself so good and noble, by necessity, *i. e.*, by the force of natural impulse, he had argued at length, especially in his discussions of the character of such vows.[4] He defines marriage as "the inseparable union of one male and one female person, not only by a law of nature (as the jurists

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 366 sq.; xxv, 387. Op. Ex., vii, 51; x, 230; xx, 66; vi, 245. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 367; xi, 326; iv, 337 sqq., 355. Op. Ex., iv, 295. Briefe v, 399 sq. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 41. Cf. supra, p. 327 sq. (Connection of this doctrine with the general doctrine of God's relation to the world and its government.)

[2] Particularly would the introduction of his position upon the question of divorce (Cf. Vol. I, p. 405) compel us to a minute examination of special details.

[3] Cf. Vol. I., p. 377.

[4] Vol. I., p. 453 sq.

express it) but also, as we may say, by the divine will and pleasure." Its object, or final cause, he holds to be the begetting of children, the "*procreatio sobolis*." In view of this purpose, we cannot condemn a marriage even when the "efficient cause," or the parents, are wicked; for the "*procreatio*" itself is a "most excellent work of God and worthy of all admiration." It was with this object in view that God instituted marriage in Paradise before the Fall; to this end, it was not good that the man should be alone. But this purpose is at once further defined by Luther as including the divine plan to thus furnish a constantly increasing number of children for the service of the Lord and for His Church. The family, whose existence is involved in that of marriage, is, in his view, the place where *children are to be trained up* in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Husband and wife are also especially bound to labor together in the service of God. Children are, further, to be so reared in the family as to become worthy and competent leaders in state and Church. Thus marriage and the family are not only the "fount and source of the human race," but are, at the same time, to serve as a preparatory school (*paratio*) of the Church and a fountain of the state. We are thus led to the definition: "Marriage is a lawful and divine union, ordained for the worship of God and for the preservation and education of posterity for the administration of the Church and state." [1]

That God ordained marriage for the sake of affording *carnal pleasure* and delight, Luther denies. But he maintains, indeed, that, inasmuch as through the Fall unbridled sexual lust has been aroused, marriage has since then, in accordance with the divine will, had the further purpose of serving as a dam against the sinful outbreaks of such passion. He even calls this now the "first object," the original design being still regarded as the "greater and chief end." Even thus, however, carnal desire retains for him a sinful character,[2] but—"the approval and good-pleasure of God covers over the miserable baseness of lust and removes the wrath of God impending over such concupiscence." [3] He constantly appeals to the consciences of the faithful, but professedly

[1] Op. Ex., vi, 7; xix, 73; i, 129 sqq., 145 sqq., 213; iv, 11, 202. Erl. Ed., xliv, 25. Op. Ex., xx, 65 sq.; vii, 110 sqq.

[2] Supra, p. 347.

[3] Op. Ex., vii, 111; iv, 202; i, 145; vi, 7 sq., 284 sq.

pure and saintly celibates, to testify how very few indeed preserve true chastity, or are free from vile inward carnal desires, etc. This, he declares, is and remains an extraordinarily rare gift of God. Those to whom it has been really granted he, with the Apostle Paul, advises to act prudently and avoid married life with all the responsibility and cares which it brings with it. He points out as among the advantages of such a course, that we can thus serve God so much the better and be less hampered in view of the peril of persecution which is always impending over the followers of Christ. But he would not have celibacy regarded as a virtue, or as a meritorious work, but as a particular state; whereas marriage is also just as well a divinely ordained state. We are by no means to give to the former the credit of representing the hundred-fold fruit-bearing of Matt. xiii. 8.[1] We dare not compare the ranks, or orders, of human life to the fruits there spoken of, as we would in that case have to call dominion, childhood, etc., purely fruits of the Gospel. And, still further, Luther declares marriage and the family, with the toils and cares which they involve, an excellent place for the practice of faith, in which men are forced and driven to this most profound and sublime spiritual exercise, the faith which depends simply upon the Word of God. There can be no question that, comparing Luther's view of the cares and perils of married life upon the one hand, and its dignity and benefits upon the other, with that presented by the apostle in 1 Cor. vii., the preponderating advantage will be found in the two cases to be located upon opposite sides. Yet Luther advises impetuous youth nevertheless to at least exercise a little patience for a year or two, and hold the flesh in subjection, as such a mortification of fleshly lusts will be a salutary martyrdom.[2]

The above-cited fundamental definition of marriage, according to which its validity as a divine ordinance is to be acknowledged, even in the case of *wicked and non-Christian partners* or parents, makes it very manifest for what reason, and in how far, Luther always remands it to the sphere of the bodily and secular life. It is, accordingly, for him: "an external, bodily thing, which neither hinders nor promotes faith, and in which one party may

[1] Cf., on the other hand, Vol. I., p. 184.

[2] Erl. Ed., li, 17, 29; xxxiii, 122 sq.; li, 59 sqq., 65; xi, 91 sqq.; li. 19, 21. Op. Ex., vi, 149.

very easily, according to 1 Cor. vii. 12, be a Christian and the other a non-Christian, just as a Christian may eat with a heathen, engage in business transactions with him, etc., or, as in our day, one party may be a true and pious Christian and the other a wicked and hypocritical Christian." The fundamental character of marriage is not in such instances destroyed, and we are not to sever the relation of the parties on such grounds.[1] On the other hand, we are distinctly taught that married life is, according to the divine will, to be conducted upon this general, natural and bodily foundation as a holy and even spiritual state, although this is not essential to its validity as a genuine marriage. It should be entered upon with faith in the Word of God which authorizes it, and in the divine will which consummates it.[2] By the very temporal cares which it involves, it should impel to constant and complete trust in God. With its outward existence and labors should be combined also a united calling upon God and education for Him and for His Church. It was only when maintaining the fundamental nature of marriage and combating the denial of its validity upon unauthorized grounds, as sanctioned by the Papacy, that Luther declared, in A. D. 1522,[3] that a Christian may even marry a heathen or a Jew. This he would afterwards, according to later utterances, no longer have admitted—maintaining only that such a marriage, when once contracted, was valid, not that a Christian could enter into such a relation with a good conscience.

The further prescriptions in regard to marriage just alluded to involve also the solemnization of the union under the *sanction of the Church*. The parties contemplating marriage announce publicly their entrance upon the state of holy matrimony in accordance with the ordinance of God, and receive the blessing of the Church—and are, without doubt, also blessed by God. Even when thus giving instructions for the proper solemnization of marriage, however, he again calls the marriage ceremony a secular matter, and marriage itself a secular state, although one instituted by God and divine, which we may, therefore, also solemnize in a much more glorious way (than by mere secular authority). And in his discussions of matrimonial laws, he never makes the validity of marriage dependent upon an ecclesiastical sanction, but only

[1] Erl. Ed., li, 39. [2] Cf. also Ibid., xxiii, 104 sq. [3] Ibid., xx, 65.

upon a *public* espousal, since marriage is "a public state, which should be publicly adopted and acknowledged before the congregation." He always firmly maintains that we dare not make a sacrament of marriage, since it is itself already a holy order.[1]

Luther had risen to a new and independent conception of secular authority, or the *Sphere of the State*, embraced by him commonly under the term, "*politia*," after arriving at a clear perception of the nature of the Church as a heavenly and spiritual institution, and of its government as an authority to be exercised through the Word and Spirit—after the claims of the Papacy to secular dominion had been accordingly recognized as anti-Christian presumption. He did not, therefore, regard a secular government as deprived of its lofty and sacred character because administered by purely secular princes, nor because, perchance, resting under the curse of the supposed earthly head of the Church. On the contrary, such a government, as a divine creature and institution, was regarded by him as in itself, equally with the Church, a holy order, a "*hierarchy*." We recall his utterances of A. D. 1519 and 1520.[2] When, in 1521, Melanchthon was inclined to object to the approval of the sword as an instrument of civil government because the Gospel does not prescribe its use, Luther replied, that the Gospel as such has nothing to do with the administration of secular affairs. But he maintains, also, that the sword is not only tolerated, but that its office is even confirmed, in the New Testament, declaring the language of Rom. xiii. to be "words of God, proclaiming a grand truth" (*magnum sonans*).[3] From the very first announcement of his view as to the divinely-ordained authority of secular law and the sword committed to it, he combined at once with it an acknowledgment of the divine sanction of the *particular governments at any time in actual existence*. This principle he applies at once impartially to such secular authorities as oppose the Gospel. Although we dare not listen to such secular rulers in matters of faith and conscience, yet we must allow them full scope, and offer no violent resistance to them, in secular affairs. Even the imperial princes who had accepted the doctrines of the

[1] Erl. Ed., xx, 52; xxvi, 105; xxiii, 208–214, 95 sq.; xxx, 371; lxv, 174. Cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 339.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 308 sq., 371 sq.

[3] Briefe, ii, 23 sq.

Gospel should submit patiently if their secular superior, the Emperor, should take their lands from them. When the Fanatics appealed to the Law of the Old Testament in justification of their violent measures of reform, Luther at once met them with a firm assertion of the exclusive authority of the civil rulers in such matters.[1] If his enemies accused him of being himself a promoter of sedition, he could rightfully claim, in reply, that it was he who first taught men to give due honor to the secular power and to assign it its proper place of authority.[2]

The object, or "final cause," of the "*politia*" Luther briefly states as the *preservation of peace* (*conservatio pacis*), just as he found the final cause of marriage in the "*procreatio sobolis*." More precisely, he would have this object secured by the administration of external law and the infliction of external penalties upon evil-doers, who disturb the peace. He ascribes to them also the administration of justice in business affairs (*justitia communicativa*), according to which contracts are to be ratified, etc. The external administration of justice in general is thus included in the object of civil government. This power, protecting the right and preventing wrong, is further designed to prove particularly beneficial to the family and the Church, making it possible for all to peaceably pursue their respective callings. But, as the last purpose of civil government—of which even the philosophers who have rightly recognized the design already mentioned know nothing—over and beyond the preservation of peace for our benefit, Luther would have us recognize the promotion of the glory of that God, whose mere instruments we are in the securing of the above-mentioned purpose, and through whose blessing and special illumination (*singularis afflatus numinis*) alone any civil administration can prosper.[3] In such a kingdom then, as in a human body, the various functions of government should be so distributed that the preservation and power of the entire body may be promoted.[4] Accordingly,

[1] Erl. Ed., xxii, 63; xii, 19 sq. Weimar. Pred., 69. Erl. Ed., xxii, 43 sqq., 258 sqq. Briefe, ii, 240; vi, 39 sq. (Erl. Ed., lxiv, 277 sqq.), iii, 560.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxii, 248; xxxi, 35, 236; xxxix, 226, 267.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxii, 68 sq. Op. Ex., xix, 73; xx, 48 sqq., 57, 230. Erl. Ed., xliv, 25. Briefe, ii, 23.

[4] Op. Ex., iv, 137.

Christians may and should also participate in the administration of secular government. The monastic notion, that we may and should renounce the duty of participation in such affairs, just as marriage is renounced, is to be rejected. Even some great philosophers have erroneously supposed such a course to be praiseworthy. The judgment of Aristotle is better, when he asserts: "A magistrate brings truth to light." The proverb says: "A solitary man is either a beast or a God"—from which it is to be inferred that a solitary man is of necessity a beast.[1] Since, moreover, Luther regards the administration of restrictive and punitive laws as the aim of the secular power, he is accustomed also, although he found, indeed, in Gen. i. 28, traces of a government exercised over temporal things from the very beginning of the world,[2] to regard the establishment of secular power and "*politia*," in distinction from that of the family and Church, as a result of the introduction of sin into the world. Christians, as such, he affirms, would have needed no secular authority; for the Holy Spirit teaches them to injure no one, to love all men, etc. No law has been given, according to 1 Tim. i. 9, for the righteous man.[3]

But in all the above descriptions of the secular power and authority as a holy ordinance of God, it is yet everywhere represented as *merely secular and external* in its character. It is an earthly peace which it is to promote. It is temporal affairs only which it is to administer. This is the position maintained by Luther, even in his later years. He places the office of the preacher as far above that of the civil magistrate as eternal life transcends in dignity and importance the temporal life. The latter office he designates, indeed, a shadow—but only a shadow, or a figure—of the dominion of Christ.[4] Souls and consciences, he holds, are eternal things, which it would be shameful to attempt to govern with worldly laws. He denies, accordingly, that the Emperor has anything to do with the Commandments in the first table of the Decalogue, which treat of the attitude of the soul toward its God; he can rise no higher than to the Fourth

[1] Erl. Ed., xxii, 73 sqq., 80. Op. Ex., iii, 186.

[2] Erl. Ed., xi, 326. Op. Ex., xx, 66; cf. supra, p. 476.

[3] Op. Ex., i, 130. Erl. Ed., xxii, 66 sq.

[4] In regard to the Kingdom of Christ, cf. supra, p. 423 sq.

Commandment.[1] He refers the sphere of the secular power, as a secular sphere, to the domain of reason, and often cites heathen rulers as models for secular government. The reason and natural wisdom implanted by God have produced laws and institutions of justice and all fine arts. The Holy Spirit does not provide and establish secular ordinances, but merely approves of such laws, as He does of the fine arts, as the finest and noblest treasure of the temporal life of man.[2] Accordingly, he condemns the Anabaptists, who think that the Holy Spirit changes political laws, and who therefore attempt to overthrow the existing secular government, and rejects likewise the revived Judaism which would substitute the laws of Moses for the imperial statutes.[3] Yet he very soon after this approved, and even promoted, an intrusion of the secular government upon the sphere of ecclesiastical affairs in the interest of the Reformation. There was not, as might appear, an extension of the imperial authority over spiritual affairs, and that, too, in a broad general sense, involved already in the language of his *Resol. super Propos. XIII.*, etc., of A. D. 1519: "The Emperor outranks all others in temporal things and even in sacred things" (*etiam sacris*); for "*sacris*" here must evidently be interpreted in the light of the immediate context, which treats of the "person and affairs (property) of ecclesiastics," and in which spiritual affairs, such as the administration of the Word and sacraments, are specifically mentioned in contrast with the matters said to be subject to the control of the Emperor.[4] But there was certainly a summons to such an intrusion into the spiritual sphere in the *Address to the Nobility*.[5] We propose, however, to trace more carefully and elucidate the further development of these principles in Luther's teaching in connection with the presentation of his doctrine concerning the Church and ecclesiastical affairs. We will there observe that he yet always firmly maintains the distinction between the spiritual and the secular, or temporal.

[1] Erl. Ed., xx, 24 sq.; xii, 21; xxii, 82 sqq., 142 sq.; xx, 268; xxvi, 27.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 216. Weimar. Pred., 59. Erl. Ed., xi, 326 sq.; xx, 29; xxxv, 381. Op. Ex., xx, 66.

[3] Op. Ex., xviii, 102 sq. Supra, p. 34 sqq.

[4] Löscher, iii, 171, 173; cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 308 sq. (differing from Schenkel, Wesen des Protestantismus, Second Edition, p. 681 sq.).

[5] Vol. I., p. 375.

There remains but little of a special character which we need stop to notice, as having any significant bearing upon Luther's fundamental conception of the subject, in addition to his general apprehension of the proper status of the state, or civil government, and the moral obligations involved.

Whilst demanding obedience to every existing civil authority, and allowing full play for reason in the framing of laws, it is particularly noticeable that Luther does not regard the *monarchical form* of government as an absolutely essential one.[1] And when we observe him applying his general principle specifically to Germany, and finding here established rather a certain form of "aristocratic" government, we have the clue to the explanation of his declarations in regard to the *resistance* which he counts it lawful for the imperial princes to offer to the secular power of the Emperor. He had at first stoutly denied the right of such resistance, even in case the Emperor should treat the princes with manifest injustice; but he afterwards—and that just when, after the formation of the Smalcald League, the matter had assumed a very practical form—granted the existence of such a right. When he then heard the jurists deducing the propriety and legality of such resistance directly from the existing imperial laws themselves, and from the very constitution of the Empire, he too acceded to the claim, casting the responsibility, however, upon those whose duty it is, by virtue of their special calling, to decide such legal questions. Together with the arguments thus adduced to justify resistance, appeal is also taken to the fact that the war which was then threatening the princes of the empire was being instigated, not really by the Emperor, but by the Pope.[2] But the right of resistance thus granted was admitted in the case of the imperial princes only in view of their legal and constitutional position. The territorial nobility, who have no such legal rights as against their prince, could not, it was held, thus protect their subjects against the papal sovereigns. Individual subjects are still always instructed to endure, for the sake of the Gospel, the violence and wrong perpetrated by their secular rulers. The maxim, that "wicked authority is still always

[1] Erl. Ed., xxvii, 92 sq.; cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 363 sq.

[2] Cf. for instances after A. D., 1531: Briefe, iv, 213 (Erl. Ed., lxiv, 266 sq.); vi, 225 (Erl. Ed., lxiv, 269 sq.); iv, 221 sq., 233 sq. Erl. Ed., xxv, 12 sqq.; iii, 58. Briefe, vi, 223 sq., v, 139. Jena, i, 562 sq.

authority in the sight of God," is held to be universally applicable —in opposition to the opinion, that " he who so conducts himself in the administration of government that men must fear him if they do right is no ruler in the sight of God." [1] The positions asserted by Luther in a deliverance of A. D. 1539 would, indeed, have led us still further, if he had himself carried them out to their natural consequences. To the question, whether the civil government was under obligation to protect its subjects even against the Emperor, the reply is there given: that the Gospel confirms also *natural* (and legal, positive) rights. Every father is, beyond doubt, under obligation to protect his wife and child against public murder by every means in his power; and there is no difference between a private murderer and the Emperor, if the latter *outside of his office* undertakes to exercise illegal power, and, particularly, openly or notoriously illegal power— since open violence cancels all obligations between the subject and his ruler by the law of nature (*jure naturae*).[2] Upon this theory, it would be necessary to inquire, first of all, how far the sphere of official jurisdiction in any particular case extends. Whenever any ruler should then be found overstepping the limits of his authority with open violence, it would be the duty, of every person at least whose province it is to guard the interests of others, as, for example, a father, to oppose such usurpation; and this would be but the exercise of a natural right. But, in announcing the above principle, Luther was concerned only for the establishment of the right of the princes of the empire to resist the encroachments of the imperial power, without stopping to carry out his theory to its natural consequences in other directions, or to note the limitations which it might be necessary to make in its general application.

The law which is to be administered by secular rulers consists essentially, according to Luther, in particular, external ordinances. In regard to its application, he frequently repeats the admonition, that, as no particular ordinance can foresee all the peculiar cases that may arise, the strict letter of the law must always be interpreted and tempered in accordance with the actual circumstances in any given case, and with the intention of the

[1] Briefe, iv, 428 sq. Erl. Ed., v, 266 sqq. Briefe, iv, 390.
[2] Ibid., vi, 223.

supposed transgressor. The same principle must control parents in the government of the family. *Moderation*, or clemency (ἐπιεικεια), should therefore always go hand in hand with law and justice. All conduct, finally, should, even in the sphere of the law, be prompted by love, which, as we have been told, is superior to legal enactments. In love, the individual is to be willing also to surrender his legal rights, a course which Luther commends as likewise demanded by Christian "moderation."[1]

Luther's conception of the constitution and authority of civil government, as ordained of God, determined also his views in regard to the *enduring of wrong*, to which Christians are exhorted in Matt. v. 39 sqq.[2] The course there prescribed, it must be first of all observed, is not binding upon those entrusted with civil authority in so far as they are considered, not as simple Christians, but in their special and official calling. Still further, it is the province of the individual, in so far as he is not merely a Christian, but also a member of the secular political organization, to make known the evil deeds of those in authority, in order to check abuses, and even, under the sanction of the government, to himself offer resistance when necessary. But the private citizen dare never under any circumstances take passionate revenge upon his own account; and, in all cases, the first duty is that of considerate and long-suffering love. Thus, here again, we find no room for the traditional distinction between *consilia* and *praecepta*.[3]

We have now reviewed, in a general way, the entire sphere of activity within which the moral life of the believer moves on earth. His is not a monastic and contemplative, but a constantly active life. The works of the Christian within this sphere are holy and good, in so far as they are performed in faith and in accordance with the Word of God, who has instituted all the various orders of society. Christ has Himself, by His own life and deeds, purified and hallowed the entire earthly life of man.[4]

[1] Erl. Ed., vii, 112; xxii, 256 sqq. Op. Ex., xi, 121 sq., 125; iii, 198, 201. Erl. Ed., viii, 53.

[2] Vol. I., p. 185 sq.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxii, 72 sqq., 81; iii, 51 sqq.; xliii, 3 sqq., 14, 37 sq., 113, 124 sqq., 131, 135 sqq., 211; l, 315 sqq. Op. Ex., v, 165; xxiii, 415 sqq. Jena, i, 562 b sq.

[4] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 283, 29 sq. Erl. Ed., xxx, 367; iv, 337; xix, 352 sqq.; cf. supra, p. 366 sq.

In the case of believers, moreover, who are new creatures, all good works are performed freely and naturally, even though they conform to the requirements of the external statutes. We cannot properly say that a believer *ought to* perform good works, just as we cannot rightly say that the sun ought to shine, or that a good tree ought to bear good fruit. The sun shines and the good tree bears good fruit as a matter of course (*de facto*). "Those legal phrases do not reach hither." [2]

We are thus brought back again, from the contemplation of the general course of life in which the Christian manifests his character, to the recognition of his *full, perfect* and *glorious liberty*. He is free in his conscience from the curse of sin and the law. He stands free, exalted in his conscience before God above all laws, since no appointed work is needed to secure his salvation and he is bound to no particular work, but all works that call for his attention are alike to him. He remains free, likewise, in his relations with his fellowmen—free in the service to which he devotes himself; free in his faith, in view of which no human ordinance can longer bind his conscience; free in the love which subjects itself to laws, yet at the same time remains the mistress enthroned above all laws.[2]

[2] Tischr., ii, 152 (to Melanchthon).

[2] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 288 sq., 349. Erl. Ed., x, 160; viii, 54; cf. supra, Vol. I., pp. 398 sq., 410 sqq., 452 sq. The doctrine concerning Christian liberty, especially as related to the ordinances of the Church, remains precisely the same as defined in Vol. I., p. 418 sq.; Vol. II., p. 34 sq. Cf., e. g., Erl. Ed., vii, 60 sqq., 113 sqq.; xix, 200 sqq., and, still further, in our Eighth Chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

It is the Holy Spirit who begets in the believer the new life which we have been contemplating, and who, from the very beginning of his religious experience, awakens faith within him. It is precisely, also, in this faith, wrought by the Holy Spirit, that the Christian possesses, enjoys and puts into practice the new life, clinging constantly to Christ, the Reconciler, and ever learning to apprehend Him more fully. Christ is now, however, continually presented, and the blessings of His redemption imparted, in the objective, external Word and in the sacraments. The Spirit desires to work only *through these Means of Grace.*

We have already, in the second chapter of our Third Book, found Luther treating prominently and expressly the questions, whether, and in how far, we are bound to these means, and without them cannot come to God nor secure the salvation offered. His utterances upon this point have also claimed our attention in connection with his general doctrine of the relation between God, on the one hand, and the human race and the world upon the other.

God is, indeed, in His essential nature, everywhere—in and above all things. But it does not follow from this that we yet have Him. If He is to have any existence *for us*, to be recognized by us, and, still further, to impart to us His grace, and to enter Himself, through Christ and His Spirit, into our hearts, He must first make it possible for us to find Him: and for this purpose He commonly employs as means external, created things.

Hence, the true and special revelation of His grace, with its life-giving power, must be sought precisely in the particular means in which it is offered to us. Even the special mediation of the announcement of salvation and the active agency of the Holy Spirit through these means of grace find their basis, still further, in the fact, that it is the general plan of God to exert His

energy in behalf of His creatures and for their preservation through the agency of other created things.[1] The visible form (*forma visibilis*) in which God presents Himself is thus for us, in the New Testament, the incarnate Son. But Christ Himself is now to be sought for by us precisely where He desires us to recognize and find Him, *i. e.*, in the visible forms of His Word, baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is here that we are to have Him nearest to us, so that we may reach out to Him, touch Him, feel Him. We dare not despise these external things as mere created objects. It is "the Word, baptism, sacrament, of God Himself." Thus it is His design to deal with us, not in His clear and unclouded majesty, which our weak flesh could not endure for a single moment, but through endurable, appropriate and delightful means, than which we could ourselves have selected no better. And as He in these means announces to us His presence, so He desires also through them to work effectually within us by His Holy Spirit. It is only as we hold faithfully to them that even our prayers are accepted.[2]

The first of these means is always represented to be

1. *The Word.*

CHANNEL FOR HOLY SPIRIT—RELATION TO REJECTORS—THE ORAL WORD—AS PREACHED TO THE UNGODLY—THE LAW STILL TO BE PREACHED—ITS SPECIFIC NATURE—CIVIL AND SPIRITUAL USE—CANNOT PRODUCE EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE—OBLIGATION AND LIBERTY OF THE CHRISTIAN—BLESSINGS CONFERRED BY THE WORD.

After his experience with the fanatical agitators, Luther was accustomed to repeat over and over again, with the greatest possible emphasis, the assertion, that the *Holy Spirit comes in no other way than through the* WORD. He even endeavors to trace a mediation of the divine call through the external Word in the case, for example, of Abraham, although the Scriptures do not so inform us. He thinks that the call may have been brought to Abraham by the patriarch Shem, or messengers sent by him.[3]

[1] Supra, pp. 213, 218 sq., 120, 327.

[2] Op. Ex., iv, 84. Erl. Ed., xlvii, 2 sqq.; xxv, 380 sq.; iv, 70 sq. Supra, p. 44.

[3] Op. Ex., iii, 84 sq.

He highly lauds, in the face of those who despise the Word, its significance and power, as being in its very outward simplicity and weakness the mighty instrument of the Spirit. He compares it to a conduit, through which the Spirit must enter the heart in order there to exercise His power, just as he had already, in the *First Commentary upon Galatians*, called it the vehicle (*vehiculum*) of grace. It is, when preached, says he, a stream that accomplishes many and great things. It is, according to Rom. i. 16, divine power itself. It is itself (according to John vi. 63) spiritual and spirit. In so far as one clings to it, he himself becomes and is spirit. Where the Word is employed, there God Himself is present in the mouth of the speaker, to obliterate sin, death and hell. The divine power which is needful to accomplish this cannot come to us in any other way than "in and through the Word." In order to indicate the power of this oral proclamation of the Gospel, St. John employs, in speaking of Christ, the figure of the Word (not, for example, that of the brightness, or divine image), and designates Him by the term which expresses the highest thing which He does and is.[1] If, indeed, many fail to believe the Word which they hear, that fact, according to Luther, detracts nothing from the character of the Word; it is, none the less, only through the Word that faith can enter the heart. So, likewise, the soil can produce no fruit without the seed, although the seed does not always take root and grow, the fault, in that case, lying not in the seed, but in the soil. Yet the Word will always bring forth fruit in the lives of at least some of those who hear it, according to Isa. lv. 11. It produces results, even in the case of those who refuse to receive it: they are hardened by it, just as by the rays of the one sun good things are softened, but evil things, like dung, are made hard. For the ungodly, the Word is a stone of stumbling, a hail-storm, a Word of perdition.[2] It is difficult, however, to deduce from the writings of Luther any positive or more precise definition of the relation between the Spirit who works through the Word and the instrument thus employed. The explanation of

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 138; xlv, 358; xlviii, 205; xv, 417. Comm. ad Gal.. iii, 259. Supra, p. 44. Erl. Ed., xlviii, 70 sqq.; xv, 140 sqq.; cf. supra, Vol. I., pp. 126 sq, 187; Vol. II. p. 315.

[2] Erl. Ed., l, 251; x, 250; li, 78; ii, 150; xvii, 35 sq. Op. Ex., xxii, 268 sq.; xviii, 88 sq.

this is to be found in his conception of the relation existing between the grace of God and the human subject, as presented in the above-cited passages. The latter represent the two as always most intimately associated. It is not merely the relation of a conduit to the water flowing through it, but that of the seed to the life-principle within it. As Luther says of the external Word, that it must always be with the Spirit, so he declares also of the Spirit, that He will always be with the Word.[1] When he says that, along with (*neben*) the external announcement of the Gospel, the Spirit writes it also inwardly upon the heart,[2] we must, according to the other utterances, understand that that which occurs thus *along with* the preaching of the Word takes place also *through* it as a means. When he says[3] that the external Word must precede, and that afterwards, if we have meanwhile received the Word with the ear and taken it *to heart*, the Holy Ghost comes and gives the Word power to take firm hold upon us, it must be added, in accordance with the declarations immediately preceding in that passage, that faith itself—by which we are to understand precisely the true reception of the Word into the heart—is a work of the Holy Spirit accomplished through the agency of the Word.

But how is it with those *in whom the Spirit nevertheless does not exert His power to beget faith?* Is He, in such cases also, with and in the Word? Is the lack of faith, in such instances, really the fault of the individuals in question, who do not allow the energy which here approaches them as well as others in the Word to attain its designed result? We are thus brought again face to face with the questions which met us at an earlier point in our investigations.[4] In accordance with the positions taken in the treatise, *De servo arbitrio*, we should be compelled to answer: The cause of such lack of faith lies in the will of God, who, in these cases, certainly did not desire that His Spirit should work effectually, although the Word was there present.[5] And

[1] Erl. Ed., li, 98; ii, 150.

[2] Ibid., xxiii, 250.

[3] Ibid., xv, 415 sq.

[4] Supra, pp. 290 sqq., 299 sqq.

[5] Vol. I., pp. 487 sq., 500.

[6] Cf. also Erl. Ed., li, 297 (probably, A. D. 1524): "When this (the proclamation of the Gospel) sounds in the ears, the Holy Spirit enters the hearts (of men) with the Word *where he will;* for He does not breathe upon all, and hence neither do all accept (*fassen*) it."

even in later periods, when Luther was accustomed so earnestly to invite his hearers to accept the salvation proffered *to all* in the Word, we still find, side by side with such exhortations, the assertion repeated, that God by his Spirit through the Word works faith *as and where He will*.[1] We still naturally inquire: Has God then, in those cases in which He does not choose to give faith, really dissolved the connection between His Spirit and the external Word—somewhat as the water may be withdrawn from a conduit? Or, are we to understand that there is always combined with the Word a divine power, a power, however, which works as a liberating and renewing Spirit only where God so determines, while in other cases itself leading to a rejection of the truth and a hardening of the heart—although Luther in his later years utterly refused to acknowledge the latter result as included in the purpose of God?[2] To these questions the writings of Luther furnish no further reply. We are here, he acknowledges, in the presence of a mystery, and should not attempt to discover why some hear and others do not.[3] We should be satisfied, he contends, with that which has a practical bearing upon our own lives—should see to it that we experience in ourselves the renewing power of that Word whose hour (in which to be impressed upon the heart by divine power) will certainly yet come to him who conscientiously perseveres[4]—without worrying over the question whether God Himself may have determined to work in us the required spiritual energy and perseverance. But we here again, as we for the last time touch upon this dark sphere of mystery unsolved in the writings of Luther, would lay particular stress upon the significant fact, that the positions which he assumed upon these perplexing questions had for their real and deepest basis, not any metaphysical or philosophical premises, but his religious interest for the maintenance of that absolute supremacy of the simple grace of God which alone can bring to us, as sinful men, the possibility and assurance of salvation, and to which, therefore, even our faith, or our inward hearing and reception of the Word, must be absolutely and exclusively attributed.

[1] Supra, p. 300, and especially, Briefe, v, 70.

[2] Op. Ex., xxii, 269.

[3] Supra, p. 299. Briefe, iii, 393 sq.

[4] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 353 sq.; cf. supra, p. 434.

We note a further characteristic feature of Luther's teaching in the importance which he attaches to the *oral*, or *preached* Word. We may see in this, primarily, a contrast to a lifeless holding of the divine Word in possession by the Church, without the employment or understanding of it, or to the much-lauded "inward word" of the fanatics. But he sets in contrast also with an intelligent and believing study of the Scriptures, the value of which he fully (following 1 Tim. iv. 3) acknowledges,[1] the entire and peculiar value and power of the Word when *orally* proclaimed. Only this does he find adequate to meet the requirements of the free, living, public administration of the Spirit under the new covenant. He remarks, that the living words cannot express themselves so accurately or well in writing as the spirit, or soul, of man can express them through the mouth —as Jerome has said: "The living voice has a mysterious quality (*nescio quid*) of latent energy." He lays particular emphasis, also, upon the divinely-chosen method, in accordance with which the Word is to be brought to us through the official ministrations of His servants in the Church and through the agency of Christian brethren in general. It is just in this form that we are to receive it with special confidence as a divine gift. And in this form, also, it is included in the general plan of God for the administration of His work and government through the medium of created things. It was thus, indeed, that the saving Word was first revealed to Luther himself and made effectual for him in the Erfurt monastery.[2]

The Word possesses and retains its power, therefore, even when *proclaimed by ungodly men*. Luther could even declare that it has a peculiar advantage under such circumstances, since the hearers can then depend only upon the Word itself, and are not tempted to rely upon the personal sanctity of the preacher. Yet he also ardently maintains that it flows with special energy, like living water, from the lips of a believing brother, according to the words of Jesus: "From whose mouth shall flow streams of living water."[3]

[1] Cf. in Walch, ix, 1062, under the First Epistle of John.

[2] Vol. I., p. 427. Erl. Ed., xxv, 360. Op. Ex., iv, 85. Erl. Ed., iv, 401; supra, p. 242; Erl. Ed., x, 367; xii, 156; xxxvii, 67. Op. Ex., xi, 27; cf. supra, Vol. I., pp. 62, 490; Vol. II., p. 328 sq.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxvi, 37; supra, p. 56. Erl. Ed., xlviii, 206 sq.

All that has thus far been said concerning the Word of God has primary and special reference to that Word as a proclamation of the Gospel message. It is as such that it begets faith, and brings with it the Holy Spirit and all heavenly blessings. We have frequently found Luther ascribing these effects directly to the Gospel.[1] In the same connections, we have had occasion to note also the position of the Law as related to the Gospel. This was brought to our notice particularly as involved in the doctrine concerning the repentance which is always associated with faith.[2] We must now examine more carefully the definitions concerning the Law, with special reference to the controversies which arose in the attempt to determine its precise relations to the righteousness of faith.

For the historical determination and exposition of Luther's *doctrine of the Law*, especial importance attaches to his relations with Carlstadt,[3] and afterwards with Agricola, who originated the leading controversy upon the subject in A. D. 1537. There are various points at which utterances of Luther might have suggested the view, that, now that the Gospel had been promulgated, the *preaching of the Law* could no longer under any circumstances be justified. In terms absolutely universal—or apparently so, at least—Luther declares, for example: "The doctrine of the Law is to be omitted";[4] "If the Law is present, then is not the Holy Spirit present, nor any piety; if He is present, then can no Law be present";[5] "He who is truly a Christian has no need of moral precepts."[6] But if the believer, or righteous man, is free from the Law, should not conversion also be accomplished without the aid of the Law, inasmuch as, upon the one hand, the Gospel itself also reveals the wrath of God against sin,[7] and, upon the other hand, repentance is not to be produced by fear of the penalties threatened in the Law, but is to spring from love toward God and righteousness?[8] These objections were confirmed, finally, by the positive utterances of Luther as to the actual invalidity of the Old Testament, Mosaic

[1] Cf. supra, pp. 208 sq., 30 sq., 44.
[2] Supra, p. 430 sq.
[3] Supra, p. 30 sqq.
[4] Jena., ii, 519, A. D. 1521.
[5] Erl. Ed., li, 297, A. D. 1524.
[6] Briefe, vi, 20.
[7] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 127, to which passage Agricola appealed. Cf. Jena, i, 554.
[8] Vol. I., pp. 162 sq., 190 sq., 264, 324.

Law as such, and even of the Decalogue itself.[1] Agricola maintained, accordingly, that repentance must be taught "not from the Law, but from the violent treatment of the Son revealed in the Gospel."

Luther would not admit any conclusions drawn from the supposed fact that he had himself at an earlier day expressed himself as opposed to any preaching of the Law in the Church, as it was to be expected that he, like others, should make progress in his apprehension of the truth. But he denies that he ever taught such a doctrine, and claims that all his writings bear testimony to the contrary.[2] We, too, can find in his utterances, from the very beginning of his labors as a Reformer, when fairly compared with one another, no other principles than those which, as we shall now have occasion to observe, he afterwards still more clearly affirmed and illustrated in his controversies with the Antinomians.

What is, in Luther's conception, the *specific nature of the Law?* He had, it must be admitted, in the earliest of his pre-reformation writings, so conceived of the Law and the Gospel as to include under the latter reproofs designed to lead to repentance, and under the former the entire plan of salvation. Yet, even here, the Law is regarded as distinctively the demanding and commanding will of God, and that will, moreover, as addressing itself to men in their inward alienation from Him. Thus the Law appears as, in its own actual character, an announcement of punishment, wrath and perdition. If he then, indeed, again includes the revelation of this divine will under the Gospel, it is yet only as the "strange work" of the latter. Thus we must interpret, for example, the passage in Erl. Ed., lxiii, 127. Accordingly, as the Gospel, or proclamation of grace, appears already under the old covenant, so we find Law also in the New Testament; but we are not therefore to conclude that this Law has itself become Gospel. It still, even here, remains a word of command, and particularly a word of rebuke, condemning sin, as, for example, even in the Lord's Prayer, and most strikingly in the revelation and sacrificial death of the Son of God. Nowhere, in fact, have we a more impressive revelation of the wrath of God than just here. Our sin and the wrath of God are brought to

[1] Supra, pp. 34, 37.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxxii, 7.

light, finally, by the manifold gifts of our merciful Heavenly Father—in so far as we despise these, or receive them without due thankfulness. In all these instances we have then, in so far, not, as Agricola thought, the preaching of the Gospel, but the proclamation of wrath, or legal preaching. All preaching that announces our sins and the wrath of God is a preaching of the Law.[1]

Luther always maintains, further, that the Law is really *from God*—by Him implanted in our hearts, and by Him also given to Moses—and that it is therefore, in its essential nature, good and holy; although we do not, it is true, in it as yet hear God speak according to His own real nature, or His character of love. That it becomes a tormentor to us, and brings death upon us, is a consequence of the attitude which we, as carnal, assume toward it. It is necessary for God thus to accomplish His "strange work" upon us through the agency of the Law that killeth. We dare draw no conclusions reflecting upon the divine character of the Law even from that which it does to Christ, or from the wrong which it perpetrates upon Him.[2]

The Law must by all means still be insisted upon, even though the Gospel has been so clearly announced. And what is here claimed has reference, moreover, particularly to the Law as contained in the Old Testament and summarized in the Decalogue. That is to say, as we have heard Luther maintain, particularly when arguing against such an authority of the Mosaic statutes as the Fanatics ascribed to them, the portion of the Law of Moses which is identical with the law of nature must remain in force. And so excellently does Luther find the divine commandments, which carry in themselves their own credentials for the human heart, expressed in the Decalogue, that he confesses himself but a scholar who is ever but beginning to understand them. It would be utterly impossible, at any rate, to tear the Law, with its reproofs, out of the hearts and consciences of men, as may be strikingly seen by a study of the penitential Psalms.[3]

[1] Vol. I., pp. 110 sq., 188 sq.; Jena, ii, 358 sq., 507. Supra, p. 230. Erl. Ed., x, 86 sqq.; supra, p. 241 sq.; Jena, i, 557. Erl. Ed., xxxii, 7 sq; xiii, 115 sq.; xxxii, 5 sqq.; cf. supra, p. 398.

[2] Supra, p. 232. Erl. Ed., xxvii, 271. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 145.

[3] Supra, p. 36 sq. Briefe, iv, 46. Erl. Ed., xiii, 115; xxxii, 5 sqq.

But in discussing the question as to the proper use of the Law, we must discriminate between the *political or civil* use and the *theological or spiritual*.[1]

In the former we have to do with the outward restraint to be imposed upon the wicked by the authority of governments, parents and teachers, for the preservation of public order and peace.[2] We may here take into consideration, together with divine precepts, also the concrete, positive expression of the Law in the statutes framed by the exercise of mere human reason.

We are at present concerned only with the *second*, which is the most necessary and really characteristic, use of the divine Law. Luther is accustomed to describe it briefly as that application of the divine precepts by which *sin is revealed* to men, *i. e.*, whereas they would by mere external discipline be made only hypocrites, sin is, in such an application of the Law, set before their consciousness and laid upon their consciences, together with the divine wrath impending over it. The Law thus reveals to man his sin and misery, death, hell, judgment, etc. And this is to be accomplished in order that the crushed, slain heart may be prepared for the reception of the Word of life, or Gospel. In this is to be already recognized, moreover, as Luther had long before taught and now reiterates with emphasis in his controversy with Agricola, the agency of the Holy Spirit, according to John xvi. 8. "And it is false (to say) that the Law convinces of sin without the Holy Spirit, since the Law was written by the finger of God." The Holy Spirit may be said to have no part in this Work only in the sense that He is not yet present in such a way as to impart Himself—or to exercise His characteristic office of drawing the hearts of men to God and giving them the blissful sense of fellowship with Him. It is in this sense that we must interpret the statement above cited, that where the Law is the Spirit is not present.[3] Even in the regenerate, also, the flesh still contends against the Spirit; and since they still need to repent continually on account of their sins, they too still continually require the preaching of the Law. Luther had so main-

[1] Comm. ad Gal., ii, 60 sqq. (A leading passage also in elucidation of the points yet to be discussed in the following paragraphs.)

[2] Briefe, ii, 532 sq. Erl. Ed., vii, 287.

[3] Vol. I., p. 90; Briefe, ii, 532 sq. Supra, p. 30. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 13 sqq.; xxv, 127 sq.; supra, p. 44; Jena, i, 555 b, 556 b.

tained already in his initial reformatory writing, *i. e.*, his *First Commentary upon Galatians*, and not, as Agricola in his untempered zeal asserted, only in the *Second Commentary* upon that book.[1]

Yet Luther had maintained that true contrition and repentance arise only from love, although the latter can spring only from faith in the grace and love of God and from the inwardly imparted Spirit of grace. That this involves no contradiction to what has been above said may be understood if we recall our former solution of the same apparent difficulty by the citation of the perfectly clear later utterances of Luther upon the subject. At all events, that condition of heart which the Law, as such, produces by its denunciations is *not as yet true Christian contrition and repentance*. Until the Word of grace, and faith, and the Spirit of grace appear, we have only a "Cain's repentance": we are at enmity with God; the Law awakens wrath in us, and makes our sin but the greater. Yet, on the other hand, the Word of grace would produce no fruit, the Spirit gain no foot-hold, good resolutions never be enkindled—if the terms of the Law did not prepare the way. It is evidently, therefore, but a partial statement of the truth to say that "repentance" must be wrought by the preaching of the Law.[2]

Luther teaches, finally, that the Law is now also *to be fulfilled*, *i. e.*, by true believers, however incomplete and mingled with sin their obedience may yet actually be. We must yet make earnest effort to that end. We are to learn from it what we have been, what is now demanded of us, and what we are yet again to become.[3] References to this phase of the subject are seldom met with in the earlier writings of Luther, although even there not entirely wanting;[4] and even in his later writings, when urging the importance of the Law, he yet, at the same time, always insists most earnestly that it is not the Law, but the Spirit working

[1] Vol. I., p. 191. Comm. ad Gal., iii, 233 sq.; i, 193 sq.; ii, 60 sqq. Jena, i, 557, 559 sq.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 162, 190 sq, 264, 324 sq.; Vol. II., p. 431 sq. Erl. Ed., xxv, 128. Jena, i, 554 b; cf. also Erl. Ed., xxiii, 13.

[3] Erl. Ed., xiii, 41, 115; xiv, 152 sqq.

[4] Cf. in the previously cited passage, Jena ii, 519: Officium legis est non exigere nostra opera, sed ostendere peccatum et impossibilitatem nostram. On the other hand, see Vol. I., p. 191.

through the Gospel, that produces good works. The Law of itself without this Spirit, he maintains, remains for us a mere dead and killing letter. He goes so far as to declare that the Law, even in the case of believers, does not help, but only demands. The aim of our obedience to the Law is not the attainment of righteousness before God, but the preservation of peace in worldly relations, the expression of gratitude toward God, and the setting of a good example to others.[1]

We can see from this what Luther means when he speaks of the *believer's glorious freedom from the Law*.[2] Above all, it is no longer to be at all taken into the account in the matter of our justification before God, or the relation of our conscience to God, which is to be determined by faith alone. Just as Luther holds that no works can here be at all considered, so is the Law likewise excluded. We are, through our baptism and the blood of Christ, absolutely free from all works of the Law and are righteous through pure grace, by which alone also we live before God. This position is confirmed by the citation of 1 Tim. i. 9. Yea, he declares, "the Law in the conscience is truly diabolical, although outside of the conscience we ought to make of it a God, to exalt it with the highest praises, and call it holy, good, spiritual," etc.[3] Furthermore, since for the believer the threatenings and terrors of the Law have no longer any force, it is no longer for him a driver or taskmaster, but a good friend and companion. He is no longer under it, inasmuch as he now does good and avoids evil, not from fear, compulsion and necessity, at the dictate of the Law, but out of free love and with a cheerful will, just as though the Law were not in existence and as though such conduct were perfectly natural to him. In this sense, also, are we to understand 1 Tim. i. 9.[4] But it is specifically the believing and regenerate *as such* whom Luther here has in view. It is in perfect keeping with the position here taken, that, so far as the weak and sinful flesh yet manifests its presence in the lives of such, they too must yet experience the compulsion of the Law, and may even be compelled, for the exercise of their faith, for a

[1] Jena, i, 555 b, 558 b. Erl. Ed., ix, 238 sq. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 157.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 392 sqq.

[3] Jena, i, 555 b. Erl. Ed., xiii, 44 sqq., 288. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 144 sqq., 265 sq.

[4] Erl. Ed., vii, 265 sqq., 296.

season to realize anew, in assaults of spiritual temptation, its very bitterest terrors.

We must yet, finally, endeavor to answer the question already touched upon,[1] whether, accordingly, in the view of Luther, the divine will in general is no longer to approach the believer, in so far as he is really regenerate and spiritually-minded, in the form of objective requirements and precepts, or in the form of obligation (the *ought*). We might look, for a decision of the question, to his conception of the state of Adam before the Fall. It was, we know, the opinion of Luther that there was in Adam originally a pure spirit of free obedience, and yet there was imposed upon him, according to the Scriptures, an objective commandment with respect to the tree of knowledge. Luther was actually confronted with the question, how it was to be accounted for, if no Law is now any longer given to the righteous man, that one was yet imposed upon the righteous Adam. He replies: The Law since sin has entered is quite a different thing from the Law before the appearance of sin. It is the latter which Paul speaks of, and he understands it in the sense of a disciplinarian appointed to keep men from sin. Adam, had the devil not deceived him, would have kept the Law given to him willingly and with the greatest delight. That an objective commandment should thus, after all, be given to Adam does not at all disturb Luther. He regards its purpose to have been to furnish Adam an opportunity to engage in outward divine worship in connection with this tree, and to perform an outward work of obedience toward God.[2] But Luther does not further pursue the question, whether it was the divine plan that the conduct of Adam should, in other particulars also, be regulated and his willing spirit guided by commandments of this character. In regard to the regenerate, we have already met the decided assertions of Luther, that they, in so far as the Spirit alone impels them, would naturally—like the shining sun or the fruit-tree—of themselves conform to the will of God.[3] But, in these passages, we still do not find a specific recognition of the point upon which the question before us depends, *i. e.*, the idea of a discrimination which might here

[1] Vol. I., p. 191 sq.

[2] Op. Ex., i, 134 sqq.; cf. supra, p. 343.

[3] Tischr., ii, 152 (supra, p. 488). Erl. Ed., vii, 267.

be made—just as in the case of Adam—between a demand in accordance with the inward inclination of the individual and the imperative "ought" of a taskmaster.

Such, then, in its entire scope, is the Divine Word which is to lead us to salvation. But how far, it might be asked, do the power and function of this Word extend when it is accepted in faith as a Word of grace? We must, according to Luther, with all possible emphasis reply: Already in the Word is proffered, and to believers granted, the full and complete blessing of salvation, Christ Himself, with the life which is in Him. It is sufficient to refer, in substantiation of this, to our review in the preceding chapter of the doctrine of the origination of faith and to the passages there cited, since it was there shown what faith already possesses when it draws its sustenance from the Word and holds firmly to it. Already by means of such faith Christ enters into us, and we, according to John vi., eat His flesh, which thoroughly deifies (*durchgöttert*) us and delivers us from the devil and from death. God includes Christ in the Word in order to distribute Him to the world; and he who lays hold of the Word, lays hold of Christ. "It brings and gives to us all things (*Alles*) —and Christ Himself."[1]

2. *The Sacraments.*

a. General View.

SIGNS AND SEALS OF THE WORD—A GIFT—POWER FROM THE WORD —DIVINE APPOINTMENT—NO BENEFIT WITHOUT FAITH—GOD NOT BOUND—SIGNS BY WHICH THE CHURCH MAY BE RECOGNIZED—SUPREMACY OF WORD.

In a passage already cited Luther calls baptism, the Eucharist and the spoken Word visible forms (*formas visibiles*). Such, in the stricter sense, are really but the two first mentioned. In them visible, really tangible objects are still presented to us along with the Word as *signs*, in connection with which we are to find

[1] Supra, p. 426 sqq. Erl. Ed., xlvii, 390 sq.; xi, 140; xii, 216; cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 191, and still further, Vol. II., p. 123.

and lay hold upon God and Christ. They are such signs for us, however, simply because God Himself gives in connection with them His Word, that is, His commandment and promise, by which we are authorized to employ them. They are thus external, tangible signs, or created objects, through which God deals visibly with us, in order that we may be sure of His presence. God had already under the old covenant, and even in Paradise, attached such signs and seals to His Word, and He has now given us under the new covenant baptism and the Lord's Supper.[1] Luther highly extols the inestimable value of these, not only in opposition to those who in their pride of heart despise these apparently weak sensuous things, of which we poor men yet so sorely stand in need, but, more particularly, as a means of strengthening believers in their hours of spiritual temptation.[2] In defining them, he adopts the formula of Augustine: "that a sacrament is a visible form (*forma*) of invisible grace." He approves also, when properly understood, the other Augustinian maxim: "the Word is added (*accedit:* comes) to the element, and it becomes a sacrament."[3]

But the principal thing is here, not in any sense a work done by us, but a *treasure which God gives* to us and which faith grasps.[4] And the signs of which we speak are not such as merely represent the treasure, but such as, *by virtue of the accompanying Word*, themselves bring this treasure with them. God, together with His Word, "puts this visible thing before us, in which we might be able to grasp the treasure spoken of." *Through* the signs the Holy Spirit works. By virtue of the Word, the signs themselves become effective (*kräftig*). The insistence upon the mediation of divine saving energy through these signs themselves, and upon the very profound union of the divine power with them as effected by the Word, is characteristic of Luther's teaching after his conflict with the "fanatical spirits." Faith does not, according to the uniform representations of the Reformer after this period, look to the Word essentially belonging to the sacrament in such a way as to receive

[1] Op. Ex., iv, 83 sqq. Erl. Ed., xvi, 48; Vol. I., p. 403 sq.; Vol. II., pp. 343, 361.

[2] Supra, pp. 296 sqq., 459.

[3] Op. Ex., iv, 83. Erl. Ed., xxi, 131, 143.

[4] Erl. Ed., xxi, 134 sqq.

salvation directly from this Word as such, and as then to have the signs, in addition, only for the still further confirmation of faith; but it is precisely through and in these signs that the blessings of salvation are extended to the believer, although the signs themselves are, it is true, qualified to serve this purpose only through the Word, and are, as such, exhibited to faith through the Word. The earthly elements are, as he was accustomed to express it, embraced in the Word (*ins Wort gefasst*), or apprehended through the Word (*creaturae apprehensae per verbum*); and hence they themselves now do that which the Word promises. They are now powerful (effective) divine things.[1]

Hence, it follows, the sacraments retain their power and significance, which rest upon the divine Word given at their institution, without any regard to the *personal character of their human administrator;* and it is not the latter, but God Himself, who accomplishes the result achieved wherever they are celebrated in accordance with the divine appointment.[2] Neither is it through the *faith of the recipient* that they gain their power and efficacy, which attaches to them simply by virtue of the Word. It is not through faith that the sacrament becomes a sacrament. We dare not confound the question as to what the sacrament is in itself and can effect with the entirely different question, in what way the appropriation of its benefits (treasure) by the participant is to be accomplished. Neither is it his own faith upon which the recipient is to depend in order, in the reception of the sacrament, to be sure of his salvation, but he is to rely upon the will and the Word of that God who has instituted the sacrament for him. This latter position Luther had occasion to maintain particularly in regard to baptism.[3]

It is to be further observed, however, that Luther did not recognize the mere utterance of a divine Word, or of the sacred name of God, above the elements as sufficient to make of them such a sacrament. The maxim: "*Accedit verbum*," etc., is not to be so interpreted. Otherwise, anything might be made a sacrament, just as men might fancy. A *precise divine precept*, or divine appointment, is essential. In exact accordance with

[1] Erl. Ed., iv, 71; xvi, 48; xxi, 133; xix, 80. Op. Ex., i, 290. Erl. Ed., viii, 94.

[2] Supra, p. 56. Erl. Ed., xxi, 144; xix, 87. Briefe, v, 146.

[3] Erl. Ed., xvi, 53, 92 sqq.; supra, p. 55.

such divine appointment, moreover, and in rightful use, must the sacraments be administered. Hence, what has been said of the union of the divine with the earthly is applicable only during the performance of the *very acts* which have been authorized at the institution of the sacrament. It is therefore rightly held "that sacraments are actions, not permanent creations (*stantes factiones*)"; and Melanchthon properly maintains "that there is no sacrament outside of the sacramental action," from which it follows that the host is not to be enclosed in a casket and carried about.[1]

Although faith does not make the sacrament nor give to it its efficacy, it must yet just as decidedly be maintained that the sacrament cannot benefit, or exert its power *for us*, unless we *receive it in faith*. Thus Luther always teaches, although he could now, indeed, no longer have said, as in his *De captivitate Babylonica:* "Baptism profits no one, but faith in the Word of promise," etc.[2] Thus, he declares that the celebration of the sacrament, in which, indeed, even without our faith the body of Christ is partaken of, is without our faith profitless, and even injurious, to us. Hence, also, he regards the faith of infants as necessary, in order that infant baptism may be efficacious. Thus too, while contending on the one hand against the Anabaptists, he yet, at the same time, maintains, as against the Romish conception of the sacrament, his former Augustinian maxim: "It is not the sacrament that justifies, but the faith of the sacrament." He at Marburg, in 1529, sanctions the framing of the article upon baptism in such a way as to assert that it is "a divine work, in which is required our faith, *through which* we are regenerated." Although he was then bearing testimony against Zwingli, not concerning faith, but concerning the sacrament as such, he yet even then was careful to designate faith, or the "right use of the sacrament", as the best part (*das Beste*). And toward the close of his life he declared: "Whether it be the sacrament of the altar, or whether it be baptism, or whether it be the Word in the public assembly, thou truly hast just so much as thou believest."[3] But, on the other hand, he always taught that faith itself,

[1] Erl. Ed., xvi, 56, 59; lxv, 215 sq. Briefe, v, 573, 577 sq. [2] Jena, ii, 286 b.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxi, 133; xii, 179, 213 sq. Supra, p. 123; Vol. I., pp. 246, 265, 396 sq.; Vol. II., p. 48. Erl. Ed., xi, 60; lxv, 90. Vol. II., p. 109 sq. Op. Ex., xi, 137 (cf. Vol. I., p. 259).

which easily grows weak, must be constantly excited afresh and nourished by means of the sacraments—by the reception of the Lord's Supper and by the devout remembrance of one's baptism.[1]

God has, moreover, as we shall find him asserting particularly with reference to baptism, *not bound Himself to the sacraments*, but can also save without them. He thus declares, especially for the purpose of quieting the consciences of those who may have been excluded from participation in the Lord's Supper, or even from baptism (and, at a still later date, frequently repeats the assertion), that, for such, faith is sufficient and fully compensates for the lack of bodily participation.[2]

Although the sacraments are thus, essentially and primarily, a work of God for us and upon us, we are yet always to conceive of them as also *signs, by which the Christian Church is to be recognized*, and as acts in which it is itself to *confess* and praise, and that publicly, its God and Saviour. This finds illustration, in regard to the Lord's Supper, in passages already cited, but more particularly in what remains to be considered under the topic of private communion. A child to whom baptism has been privately administered in case of necessity is to be afterwards presented (*vorgetragen*) in the Church, "because baptism ought to be a sacrament, that is, a public sign of confession."[3]

In connection with all these and similar utterances of Luther in regard to the sacraments, the WORD retains the first place, as "the most necessary and the highest part in Christianity (the Christian Church)." For, says he, the latter could not exist without the Word, which alone gives it its power and which must make known to men its importance and significance, whereas the Word can exist without the Church, and it is possible, in case of emergency, to be saved without any sacrament, but not without the Word.[4]

[1] Löscher, ii, 581. Jena, ii, 285 b. Erl. Ed., xxiv, 326 sq.; xii, 179; ii, 207; lxv, 91.; xxiii, 193.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 350, 395, 424. Vol. II., p. 128. Erl. Ed., xxiv, 207; xii, 179; xxxi, 369. Briefe, v, 547, 39 (cf. Jena, ii, 577 b).

[3] Erl. Ed., x, 303 sq.; xi, 182 sq.; xii, 212. Briefe, v, 146. Supra, pp. 82, 114.

[4] Erl. Ed., xxi, 131; xii, 215 sq.; xlvii, 207 sq.; xxxi, 351. Briefe, v, 547.

b. Baptism.

DOES NOT EFFACE ORIGINAL SIN—FORGIVENESS ENDURING—SIGNIFICANCE OF SIGN AND PROMISE—FIRST EFFECT IS FORGIVENESS—NEW LIFE IMPLANTED—DIPPING BENEATH WATER—EFFICACIOUS THROUGH WORD—PERPETUAL OBLIGATION—INFANT BAPTISM.

It was the special task of Luther, in combating the theory of baptism embodied in the prevalent theology of the day, to establish and defend the two propositions: that original sin still clings as real sin to the baptized, and that, on the other hand, the forgiveness imparted in baptism retains perpetual efficacy, and consequently repentance for sins subsequently committed must consist in nothing else but a return to this forgiveness. In view of this comprehensive and perpetual significance of baptism, the vow then assumed was to be regarded as taking precedence of all others by means of which a Christian might afterwards seek to work out his salvation. And the entire comprehensive liberty of the believer, his spiritual character, his priestly rank, etc., were traced back by Luther to his baptism as their source.[1] It was in the defence, especially, of infant baptism that he contended against the "fanatical spirits." In the conflict with the latter, the entire objective character of baptism and the sacraments in general was clearly presented and maintained.

In explaining the nature of baptism, Luther had at first taken as his *starting point* the significance of the visible sign, or the dipping of the body beneath the water. He afterwards selected, as the unvarying initial point in all discussions of baptism (as in the case of the Lord's Supper), the words of promise, *i. e.*, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," and, accordingly, makes the special significance of baptism to consist in this: "That we through it are to be saved, that is, to be delivered from sin, death and hell and from all evil, and to be righteous, holy, alive, and heirs of heaven." It is for him, in the language of Paul, a "washing of regeneration," just because we are through it born to the new spiritual life, in which we become righteous before God and heirs of heaven.[2]

[1] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 326, 356 sq., 395. Erl. Ed., xvi, 88 sqq.; supra, Vol. I., pp. 359 sq., 372 sq., 398.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 356, 395 sq. Erl. Ed., xvi, 87, 66 sqq.; xxi, 17; xix, 81; cf. supra, p. 454.

In this attainment of salvation, the first and fundamentally essential thing—in accordance with Luther's whole conception of the plan of redemption—is again the *forgiveness of sins*, secured through the blood of Christ; and, in order that we may experience this justifying grace of God through faith, the Holy Spirit desires—in immediate connection with our baptism—to enlighten and inflame us with His fire. Through this forgiveness we become perfectly pure in the sight of God, notwithstanding the fact that sins yet cling to us and must be still further driven out of us. To our baptism, in which forgiveness is granted us for all sins, we must, whenever we fall, creep back again.[1]

But we are, in our baptism, also cleansed from sin in the sense, that it is inwardly overcome and put away from us. In that we are, according to the testimony of Paul in Rom. vi., baptized into the death of Christ, our flesh and blood are condemned and given over to death, to be entirely drowned, in order that our life on earth may thereafter be a constant dying to sin. And in that we are planted together with Christ into a similar death, this our death becomes an *implanting of life*. This implantation of life begins in baptism, and we must then make it manifest that such life abides in us and does not remain fruitless. Just in baptism do we receive the grace which cannot thereafter stand idle, but which continually contends against evil lust, arouses within us good desires, and prompts us to good works.[2]

The *dipping under the water* Luther still, as at first, considers as a picture, or symbol, of this progressive drowning of the old Adam in contrition and repentance; but he generally understands the cleansing thus signified very comprehensively, as embracing the whole fundamental work of deliverance, in which connection he then designates the washing of baptism as, first of all, a washing "through forgiveness of sins."[3]

The part to be ascribed to the *water* in baptism we have already seen, when reviewing the doctrine of the sacraments in general. Baptism, says Luther, is entirely embedded (*eingeleibt*) in the name and Word of God, and permeated by them, so that

[1] Erl. Ed., xvi, 112 sq., 119 sqq., 74; xix, 83 sq.; xxi, 135; Vol. I., p. 395.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 326, 397; Vol. II., p. 462 sq. Erl. Ed., ix, 146–152; xvi, 104, 119; xv, 49.

[3] Vol. I., pp. 356, 400. Erl. Ed., xxi, 17; xxx, 270 sq.; ix, 146.

it has become quite a different thing from common water. He employs here again, as in setting forth the union of the bread with the body of Christ, the illustration of the iron thoroughly permeated by fire, and also the further figure of "water saturated with herbs or sugar." This baptism has a purely spiritual significance, and brings spiritual blessing. Yea, God Himself, as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is present in it, as at the baptism of Jesus. The blood of Christ is even mingled with it, as water and blood once flowed from the pierced side of Jesus (cf. John xix. 34 sq. and 1 John v. 6).[1] Referring to the fact, that the body is also involved in the act of administering baptism—that it is sprinkled with water while the Word is being spoken for the soul—Luther, in one passage, infers that "since water and Word are one baptism, so also both *body* and soul are saved."[2] But he constantly reiterates, in opposition to the scholastic theologians, the assertion, that it is only *by virtue of the Word that the water is efficacious*. Nothing but the Word, or the promise, dare be spoken of as the power given to the water. He even at times designates the Word alone as that by which we are saved. In the passage in which he refers to the participation of the body in this sacrament, he says: "The soul is saved through the Word, in which it believes; but the body, because it is united with the soul, and also accepts (*ergreifet*) the baptism as well as it can."[3]

In insisting upon the point, that the efficacy (*Kraft*) of the sacraments is involved already in and with the Word in order that it may thus be accessible to faith, and in opposition to the idea that it is imparted to them by the act of the *person administering* them, Luther goes so far as to hold—as did also the Papists—that even a baptism administered in play and for mere sport was to be considered a proper and valid baptism. In support of this position, he cites the instance of a baptism administered by Athanasius at one time in childish sport, which Bishop Alexander afterwards acknowledged as valid, and also that which, according to an old legend, some impious jester administered in ridicule of Christianity to a certain person, to whom, however,

[1] Erl. Ed., xvi, 64. Op. Ex, xix, 237. Erl. Ed., xvi, 73, 118; xlv, 114 sqq.; xix, 83; cf. xvi, 74.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxi, 135. [3] Op. Ex., i, 290. Erl. Ed., xxi, 133, 135.

there was revealed, in the very act of his baptism, a divine inscription of the words of Eph. iv. 5 sqq., and who was thereby led to faith.[1] We have already remarked that we are unable to reconcile with the position here taken some other utterances of Luther, particularly those in which he holds that at celebrations of the Lord's Supper conducted by Sacramentarians even believing guests receive only bread and wine.[2]

From the contemplation of the blessing which baptism brings with it by virtue of the accompanying Word, our attention is directed, finally, as already, indeed, indicated in the above citations, to the *perpetual obligation* which it involves upon the part of the recipient. It is the duty, as well as the privilege, of the Christian to constantly recur to his baptism and the forgiveness of sins which it involved; and he will always have enough still to learn and to do in order that he may firmly believe all that it promises and brings to him. He is, further, under special obligation to persevere in the conflict which began at his baptism, and to manifest in his life the fruits which it should properly produce. He is thus by his daily walk to beautify and adorn the exalted treasure which he has received.[3]

The queston, whether, or in how far, the above specifications are to be actually exemplified in *infant baptism*, has been already discussed at length.[4] We may now call particular attention to the manner in which Luther, as then noted, advanced to the position, that the effectual divine power is to be located entirely in the baptism itself. This power lies in the baptism by virtue of the Word, although it can, indeed, even in the case of children, become efficacious only by means of faith. And, just as it has, in other connections, been held that faith is awakened directly through the sacraments and the Word of promise contained in them, so it is now said to be effected in children through the very act of baptism itself and through the Word there announced. Christians are said to present their children with the believing prayer that the Lord may grant them faith; but then the admin-

[1] Löscher, ii, 201 (in the Resol. disput., etc.: cf. Vol. I., pp. 262, 265). Jena, ii, 286. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 356; xliv, 113 sqq.

[2] Supra, pp. 129, 157 sq., 161.

[3] Vol. I., p. 138. Erl. Ed., xxi, 135; xvi, 104 sq.

[4] Supra, p. 45 sq.

istrant, whose words and deeds are the words and deeds of Christ, and from whose lips they now hear the Gospel, gives them faith.[1] In the case of those children who, by no fault of theirs, are overtaken by death while yet unbaptized, Luther trusts to prayer addressed to the mercy of God, even without baptism. He does, indeed, in one passage of his earlier writings, inquire, as though there were no hope for the unbaptized children even of Christian parents: "What prevents (in view of original sin) children unbaptized from being condemned to all eternity?"[2] But, on the other hand, he declares in the *House Postils*, that those children for whom parents, etc., earnestly pray, and whom they offer up to God, are beyond doubt graciously accepted by Him. He advises afterwards that death under such circumstances be represented to the wicked as a sign of the divine wrath; and then further counsels us not to attempt to pry into such matters as God has not revealed to us. Nevertheless, he would have us represent to the pious and believing for their consolation, that God has not bound Himself to the sacraments; that it is a great matter that such children, although defiled by inborn sin, have not yet actually transgressed the Law; that it is the nature of God to pardon and have compassion. For such children we should therefore hope and believe—and not doubt.[2]

c. The Lord's Supper.

THE GIFT IMPARTED—THE CRUCIFIED AND GLORIFIED BODY—SACRAMENTAL UNION VS. TRANSUBSTANTIATION—WORD OF CHRIST AND SPECIFIC APPOINTMENT—ADORATION OF SACRAMENT—SACRAMENTAL UNION ONLY DURING CELEBRATION—BENEFITS FOR THE BODY—SEAL AND PLEDGE OF PROMISE—FORGIVENESS OF SINS—ADHERENCE TO WORDS OF INSTITUTION—MEMORIAL—THANK-OFFERING—FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST AND FELLOW-BELIEVERS.

Through baptism, says Luther, we are, in the first instance, born anew; the Lord's Supper is then a food for souls which nourishes and strengthens the new man.[3]

[1] Vol. II., pp. 45 sq., 49, 51.

[2] Jena, ii, 433 (A. D. 1521). Erl. Ed., iii, 166 (A. D. 1534). Briefe, iv, 672 sq. (A. D., 1536.) Op. Ex., iv, 78, 121 sq, 129. 289. Briefe, vi, 337 sqq. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 340 sqq. (A. D. 1542).

[3] Erl. Ed., xxi, 145.

His doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper has been already—more fully even than that concerning baptism—explained in its particular details in the earlier portion of this work, especially in our Third Book.

From the very first discussion of the subject, we recognized in the view of Luther, as we shall now again in our final review have occasion to note, above all else the most decided opposition to every theory which would substitute for the divinely imparted gift in this sacrament, which the communicant is to receive in simple faith, any human work, whether it be the sacrificial act of the officiating priest, or the meritorious deed or deeds of the communicants, or their devout religious ardor and self-mortification. He rejects even that explanation of some of his papal antagonists which represented it as a thank-offering; for even thus we would still make of it a work and merit of our own, and thus the grace of God toward us would not be magnified, but our work toward God.[1]

As the actual blessing, or *gift, to be received in the sacrament*, we have heard him designate, in the first instance, the fellowship of Christ and His saints, which is *signified* by the sacrament, regarding as the thing signifying, or the sign, not by any means the bare bread and wine, but, as well, the body itself given with the elements. We were then led to recognize the more advanced and permanent form of his doctrine in his designation of the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the words of institution, as the treasure which is bestowed upon us in the impartation of the true body and blood of Christ.[2] But the presence of this true objective body itself had not been in the beginning specifically maintained nor thoroughly discussed by Luther,[3] although he never denied it—not even in his decided and open opposition to the doctrine of transubstantiation as based upon poor philosophy. It was only the contest with the Sacramentarians that led him to a careful examination of this phase of the doctrine. The pressing question now arose: What is the peculiar inner value of the body itself? Is any blessing, and if so, of what kind, bestowed in the body itself?

[1] Vol. I., pp. 341 sq., 348, 352, 392, 394, 458. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 185 sq.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 358 sq., 347.

[3] Supra, p. 109.

If we now once more call to mind briefly the theory of the Lord's Supper, and particularly with respect to the body therein dispensed, as we find this theory exhibited in the polemical writings of Luther, and in his later practical works as well, we will find present in the sacrament, according to it, *that body of Christ which was once crucified for our sins, which is now exalted to heaven and glorified*, and which is, moreover, according to its entire original nature, of a spiritual and divine kind.[1] In opposition to the antagonists who denied the possibility of an existence of the body in heaven and at the same time in the sacrament, Luther spoke of the different kinds of presence, and even of the omnipresence, of His body as involved in the personality of Christ. But we must again call attention to the fact that Luther regards the "definitive" presence as furnishing a sufficient explanation of the existence of the body in the sacrament. Not only in his practical and popular, but as well in his later polemical writings, he no longer appealed to the "repletive," omnipresent existence of the body.[2] And, still further, the real basis for our faith in the presence of the body in the Lord's Supper is not to be in any case our theory as to the various kinds of presence, but, on the contrary, simply the Word of the Lord and the omnipotence of God, who is able to do what he says.[3] He bases the doctrine simply upon this Word, particularly in all his sermons and in the catechisms.

There was, therefore, no need of the doctrine of transubstantiation in order to make possible an acknowledgment of the presence of the body and blood in the elements as required by the language of Christ. Of this doctrine Luther always speaks with the greatest contempt as an empty and sophistical human invention, although he does not regard it as a matter of great concern that some should yet cling to it. Even Aristotle, to whom its advocates appealed, would, he says, have laughed at the coarse donkeys.[4] He himself regards the union of the body and the elements as one of a unique—specifically "*sacramental kind*," differing also from that existing between the two natures of Christ, with which he sometimes compares it—most fittingly,

[1] Supra, p. 125. [2] Supra, pp. 142, 189. [3] Supra, p. 189.

[4] Vol. I., pp. 381, 389 sqq., 462. Briefe, v. 362, 568; vi, 284 sq. Erl. Ed., xxv, 137; xxxi, 402.

perhaps, illustrated in the identity of the dove and the Holy Spirit.[1] That even the figure of the glowing iron [2] does not suffice to express the characteristic nature of this union, is evident from the fact that he employs it also to illustrate the union of the Word with the water of baptism. That Christ says of the bread: "This is my body," is explained by the rhetorical figure, synecdoche.[3] We can thus speak even of a "tearing" of the body with the teeth, although the body cannot, of course, be itself masticated or bitten into pieces.[4] It was possible, indeed, even with the recognition of a synecdoche, to still avoid the acknowledgment of a proper bodily reception, as was actually the case with the theologians of Upper Germany. It may, therefore, not have been without reason that it was said that the latter at length also failed to satisfy Luther.[5]

Luther's response to the question, what it is that "brings into the bread" the body of Christ, corresponds perfectly with what has been observed in respect to the sacraments in general. The *Word* of God, uttered at the consecration of the elements, has this power. It has such power, however, only by virtue of the *command and appointment of Christ:* "Do this," etc. This binds the other two things, *i. e.*, the Word and the elements, together. It is, then, Christ Himself who there works and dispenses. We hear the words as though they fell from His own lips.[6] Hence the sacrament is valid even though the administrant be an evil person or one not regularly authorized.[7] But we must here bear in mind, on the other hand, the positions held by Luther, that the sacrament has validity only in the Church accepting the ordinance of Christ, and that the body of Christ is present neither in the celebrations of the Supper by the Sacra-

[1] Vol. I., p. 391 sq.; Vol. II., pp. 80 sq., 146. The term "dynamic union," at least in the ordinary sense of the term, would here be liable to misinterpretation, since Luther means to express an entrance of the body, not only in its power, but in its substance. Cf. Vol. II., p. 169.

[2] Vol. I., p. 390; Vol. II., p. 80.

[3] Vol. II., pp. 80 sqq., 146.

[4] Supra, pp. 146, 163. Erl. Ed., xxx, 130.

[5] Supra, p. 188.

[6] Supra, pp. 67, 74, 81 sq. Erl. Ed., xvi, 59; xxxi, 361 sq. Briefe, iv, 652.

[7] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 362.

mentarians nor in the popish hedge-masses.[1] Even in the public communion of the Papists, Luther refuses to recognize the presence of the blood of Christ in the wine, since the latter is, in defiance of the ordinance of Christ, withheld from the laity.[2]

As Luther now, in his simple holding to the words, "This is my body," ever strenuously maintained the real presence of the body, so he refused to hear of anything more than this. That, with the body, the soul of Christ and the *entire Godhead must also be present*, he regarded as merely a vain human inference.[3] This distinction was of special importance in the defining of his view as to the participation of the ungodly, for whom he held that Christ "has nothing more than a body"[4] in the Lord's Supper, since they do not at the same time receive Him also in faith. We should understand in the sacrament, he says in one passage,[5] not the entire Christ, or His kingdom, but His body "as a part of His kingdom and of the entire Christ." Nor does he allow himself to be disturbed in this position by the fact that he also described the flesh of Christ as itself full of the Spirit and of divinity.[6] He thus always rejects all suggestions of "concomitance," because no one has commanded us to put more into the sacrament than the clear words of Christ give us.[7] He even declines to approve the view, that the blood is also at least implied in the bread, and the flesh in the wine.[8] On the contrary, appealing to 1 Cor. x. 16, he regards the communion of the body and that of the blood as distinct in the bodily form, although in spiritual communion (of which the Fanatics have so much to say) body and blood cannot be separated.[9] He repels with scorn the notion of the Papists, who infer from the supposed "concomitance" of the body and blood that the reception of the bread alone is sufficient. Yet he does not directly deny the presence of the blood in connection with the body given in the bread. It suffices for him that we have no need of such artful theories in addition to the clear institution of the Lord. Even

[1] Supra, pp. 168, 170, 130, 157, 161, 459.
[2] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 367 sq.
[3] Supra, p. 68 sq.
[4] Erl. Ed., xxx, 355 sq.
[5] Ibid., xxix, 295.
[6] Ibid., xxx, 130; cf. supra, p. 128 sq.
[7] Ibid., xxx, 418 sq.
[8] Cf. at earlier period, Vol. I. p. 424.
[9] Erl. Ed., xxx, 361.

though there were as much under the one element as under both, the one element would still not be the whole ordinance of Christ, but we would receive in it only the half, or a mutilated form, of His appointed ordinance.[1]

The *adoration* of the sacrament had become the prevalent custom in the Lutheran reformed churches in so far as this was involved in the reception of the elements by the communicant while in a kneeling posture. This Luther approved in view of the presence of the body of Christ and, at the same time, of the divine Word of promise, adding the remark that we should at all times hear the Word, if not on bended knees, yet with humble hearts.[2]

Luther always maintains that the union of the bread and body, resulting as it does simply from the appointment of Christ, endures only *during the act of distribution* and the reception by the communicant in whose behalf Christ has ordained it. The sacrament was given us, not to be preserved and carried about, but to be eaten and drunken. More precisely, he would extend the time of the sacrament, or the sacramental act, until all have communed, the cup has been drained and the bread eaten, and the altar is deserted. He warns against distracting questions which may here arise. He declares, accordingly, that we should not be at all concerned to know whether the body of Christ is still present in the wafer as enclosed in the sacristy and carried about. At a later date, he asserts most positively that "outside of the use, the sacrament is *nothing*." He yet always advises that, to avoid all offence, the consecrated elements unused by a sick person, or consecrated wafers which may have become mixed with those never consecrated, should be burned.[3]

But let us now inquire what *particular blessing*, or what kind of benefit, the body brings with it in addition to that already assured in the words of institution, which themselves already offer, and to the believing hearer impart, the forgiveness of sins, and, with it, eternal salvation?[4] Luther had at first described the body given in the external element simply as a sign, seal and pledge of

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 401, 417 sqq.; xxxi, 401; xxv, 137; cf. supra, Vol. I., p. 461.

[2] Cf. supra, pp. 69, 70 sq. Op. Ex., xi, 89. Briefe, v, 363. Supra, Vol. II., p. 195.

[3] Briefe, iv, 390, 652; v, 233, 573, 578, 608, 777.

[4] Cf., particularly, Vol. I., pp. 347, 351; Vol. II., pp. 69 sq., 76, 82.

these spiritual blessings, just as in baptism and in connection with various promises of the Old Testament external elements were employed as signs and pledges. And it is a pledge of a most exalted and unique kind. That particular body is presented as a pledge, through the death of which forgiveness has been secured. The sacrament is thus, according to Luther, a certification of that Lord's Supper, which is, according to John vi., also elsewhere, in the Word, imparted to faith.[1] We have been told, further, that this body itself is bestowed upon us for the forgiveness which has been secured through it,[2] and hence the "given" of the words of institution is understood of the giving of the body to the communicants. And, finally, Luther attributed to the body, as flesh of the Spirit and flesh of God (*Geistesfleisch* and *Gottesfleisch*), also a peculiar efficacy in the bodily reception of it,[3] *i. e.*, a beatifying efficacy for the *body* of the believing recipients, who receive it also spiritually for their souls. But we must nevertheless yet ask:[4] Is it not still possible, according to Luther, for faith, even without this bodily reception of the body of Christ, through the Word alone to appropriate the entire Christ, with all His spiritual blessings, to the eternal salvation and life of the entire personality of man? This question presses upon us with the greater urgency, as we have noted, in the present and the preceding chapters, the complete efficacy ascribed to the Word and faith in general.[5] It is, moreover, worthy of note in this connection, that the claims of special benefit for our bodies asserted in the controversy with Zwingli and Œcolampadius now fall in his other writings decidedly into the background. We find it but once more asserted, in the *House Postils*,[6] that, as the holy Fathers also declare, our mortal bodies are to be here nourished into eternal life through the immortal food of the body and blood of Christ placed in our mouth.[7] And in his eschatology Luther makes no reference to the benefit of the body of Christ in the

[1] Erl. Ed., xii, 376.

[2] Supra, p. 112 sq.

[3] Supra, pp. 122, 125 sqq.

[4] Cf. supra, p. 128.

[5] Supra, pp. 426 sq., 503, 506.

[6] Erl. Ed., vi, 476.

[7] Thomasius, Christi Person und Werk, Vol. III., pp. 2, 100, says, indeed, that the view referred to still echoes occasionally in Luther's sermons, but, so far as as we can discover, knows only this one example (the page of which is not rightly given in his reference).

sacrament as specifically affecting the body of the recipient. The forgiveness of sins, which is, indeed, received already in the Word, appears again, even in the controversial writings against Zwingli, as the principal thing.[1] The *Larger Catechism* describes the body of Christ as a treasure, through which just this same forgiveness is secured. It is said to be appropriated by us in the distributed body; and this body, it is asserted, cannot be a fruitless thing.[2] It is here merely mentioned in an incidental way, that when our soul is restored to health our body is also at the same time benefited.[3] The sermon, *Vom hochwürdigen Sacrament*, of A. D. 1534, merely again says: Where Christ is, there is forgiveness: here is His body; he who eats it and believes that it is given for him must surely have the forgiveness of sins.[4] In the *Commentary upon Joel*, first published in 1547, the relation of the body of Christ to the forgiveness of sins is briefly set forth, in the spirit of the earlier writings of the Reformer, as follows: God has, as it were, locked up (included) the Word of forgiveness in baptism and the Lord's Supper. The latter has the promise that the body of Christ is given for us, and, together with the promise, the body itself is proffered to us with the bread, in order that our hearts may the more firmly lean upon the promise.[5]

We may, then, summarize our results as to Luther's conception of the significance of the distribution of the body of Christ in the sacrament as follows: It is, in the first place, a great matter for us that God desires to help us in so many ways.[6] Here we have the advantage, that the blessing of forgiveness is also brought home specifically to the individual believer in a way more direct than in the general proclamation of the truth in preaching.[7] Here is, further, given (otherwise than in private absolution) the most exalted pledge, the body of Christ itself. Here the life residing in the body of Christ (yet otherwise than, as the *Larger Catechism* testifies, in baptism) is also imparted directly to our body, in order that it may become effectual in the believing recipient.[8] We must, however, be careful, in attempting to

[1] Vol. II., p. 149 sq.
[2] Erl. Ed., xxi, 145 sq.; cf. Vol. II., pp. 113, 150.
[3] Erl. Ed., xxi, 152
[4] Ibid., ii, 208 sqq.
[5] Jena, iv. 809 b; cf. 806 b.
[6] Vol. II., p. 129.
[7] Vol. II., p. 114; cf. Erl. Ed., xi, 186.
[8] Cf. Vol. II., pp. 126 sqq.

represent accurately the view of Luther, not to lay more stress upon the last-mentioned item than he himself does, however important in itself it may appear to us.

If we be now called upon to explain, in view of all the foregoing, why Luther, in his *interpretation of the words of institution*, clung so pertinaciously and anxiously to the literal sense,[1] we dare not look for the real reason in any entirely peculiar benefit, or blessing, as, in his view, proffered by the words only when so understood; nor dare we trace it back to the inner impulse, inspired by mystical or theosophic tendencies, to find the divine and the material (*kreatürliche*) as intimately united as possible, or, at least, to find the divine revealing and proffering itself to us in things visible. Although his theory of the Lord's Supper did, indeed, harmonize very fully in the latter respect with his general view of the divine method of self-revelation, yet the former would not have been absolutely required by the latter, nor even secured by it against objections. The decisive reason for his pertinacity in maintaining the position in question was, and always remained, for him precisely that which he himself uniformly gave, *i. e.*, that it is unauthorized and, as the ancient allegorists as well as the modern fanatics prove, highly perilous, to depart from the literal sense without urgent occasion furnished by the Scriptures and faith themselves. Such an occasion it was the more difficult for him to discover in the arguments of his opponents, the greater the barrenness actually revealed by their very first attempts at exegesis, the more evidently they were influenced by inferences of mere human reason, the more distinctly there was combined with their opposition to the presence of the body a general denial of the nature of the sacrament as a divine gift, and the more boldly he himself, on the other hand, in harmony with the principles avowed in other connections, rejected all the presumptuous suggestions of reason, felt himself compelled, in accordance with his whole conception of the plan of salvation, to hold fast to the nature of the sacrament as he had apprehended it, and, finally, discovered here also a divinely-proffered satisfaction of the inner impulse above mentioned.

Having taken into view the essential nature of the sacrament and the gift which Christ therein bestows upon us, we must always,

[1] Cf. Vol. II., p. 257.

with Luther, consider further, that in celebrating the holy Supper we are to celebrate the memory of the Lord and of His death—that is, we are here to recall with open acknowledgment, thanksgiving and praise what He has done, suffered and given for us. Such a commemoration of Christ is also really a *thank-offering*, or *sacrifice of thanksgiving;* and this name may accordingly be given to the reception, or use, of the sacrament. But the sacrament itself is not a sacrifice; it is a gift of God, which we receive with thanksgiving.[1]

This commemoration is, moreover, to be *publicly* celebrated by ministers and communicants. So strongly does Luther insist upon this, that he advises believing Christians who, surrounded by Papists, could not venture to celebrate the Holy Supper openly, to omit its observance altogether, although at the same time urging them to the study of the Word in their homes.[2] This was an entirely different matter from the reception of the communion by the sick in their own homes in accordance with the recognized order of the Church. This custom was sanctioned everywhere in the Lutheran Church. Nevertheless, Luther, in one passage, expresses disapproval of it and declares that he would like to see it abolished. The reason which he here gives is that the custom of private communion becomes, especially in times of pestilence, an insufferable burden (for the Church and her ministers). He suggests that the sick might commune three or four times in the year, and then seek strength through the Word upon the approach of death. Yet we may suspect that his views were here colored by the influence of his conception of the act as properly a public one.[3]

From the study of the nature of the Lord's Supper and its public and general celebration we are naturally led back to that *fruit or effect of* its observance of which Luther chiefly spoke in

[1] Vol. II., pp. 82, 124 sq. Erl. Ed., ii, 207, 247; xxiii, 184, 189 sq. Supra, Vol. I., p. 352 sq.

[2] Jena, ii, 577 b. Briefe, iv, 160, 270, 330, 596; v, 38 sq. Luther advises the Lutherans of Augsburg to petition the Zwinglian magistrate of that city for permission to hold regular celebrations of the communion in their homes, which would thus be to a certain extent a public confession (Briefe, vi, 144).

[3] Briefe, v, 227 sq.; cf. also, in regard to clinical communion, Erl. Ed., xxi, 256 sq., and, further, Erl. Ed., xxviii, 307 sq.

his first publication upon the subject of the sacrament, *i. e.*, the *fellowship of believers with one another in Christ.* As they eat of one table and unitedly make public confession, they should also—yet more fully than through the mere oral Gospel—become of one mind and heart in faith and love. There is here a "*communio.*" They should be as one loaf, or cake, since they have all the possessions (blessings) of Christ in common, share their treasures the one with the other, and in their entire outward life are, in mutual helpfulness, like one body. Luther again cites the illustrations used by the ancient Fathers, of the grains which have united to form the one communion-loaf, and the grapes which have mingled their juice in the one cup.[1] It was precisely in this oneness of believers in the spiritual body of Christ that he still, in his *Grosses Bekenntniss vom Abendmahl*, found that which is to be "typified and indicated" by the sacrament itself.[2]

Thus the utterances of the Reformer in regard to the Lord's Supper retain from first to last their unbroken inner consistency.

d. Absolution. Private Confession. Excommunication.

IMPARTS FORGIVENESS—DEPENDENT UPON POWER OF THE KEYS—ANNOUNCES GRACE TO INDIVIDUALS—REQUIREMENTS FOR RECEPTION—OBJECTIVE CERTAINTY—DOES NOT FOLLOW FORGIVENESS—INVOLVES OTHER AGENCIES—ADMINISTRATION BY LAYMEN—PRIVATE CONFESSION—RELATION TO CHIEF MEANS OF GRACE—EXCOMMUNICATION—NO OTHER SACRAMENTS.

Through the Word, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, holds Luther, is it the purpose of God to save us. But he frequently associates with these also Absolution, as constituting with them means through which we are to have Christ in closest contact with ourselves.[3] Of the latter he expressly says, that we are to draw (*holen*) forgiveness from it; and while, on the one hand, it must be received in faith, faith is, on the other hand, to be

[1] Vol. I., p. 338 sqq.; Vol. II., pp. 67, 114, 149. Erl. Ed., xi, 167 sqq; 186 sqq.; ii, 209 sqq.; iv, 220.

[2] Supra, p. 184. Erl. Ed., xxx, 271; cf. Vol. I., p. 338 sq.

[3] Thus, Erl. Ed., xlvii, 82.

strengthened by it, just as by the sacraments and preaching. What is, then, its peculiar significance?[1]

Luther's conception of the nature and proper use of absolution was developed and clarified already, in its chief outlines, in the course of the investigations and discussions occasioned by the publication of his *Ninety-five Theses*.[2] The forgiveness of sins is, as he then already declared, really imparted to the individual in the absolution pronounced by the confessor; and this occurs, further, by virtue of the *power of the keys* which Christ has granted to His Church, or by virtue of the words of promise: "whosoever sins ye remit," etc., "what ye loose on earth," etc. By virtue of this Word, the absolution is entirely valid even when pronounced by unworthy persons—and also when, in consequence of unbelief, it is not received by the person to whom it is announced. By virtue of this same Word, it is perfectly valid upon the lips of any Christian brother, since it depends not at all upon the character of the person administering it, but upon the Word of promise, and since the keys belong to all Christians, or disciples of Christ.

Whilst we shall find these principles uniformly maintained in all the later utterances of Luther upon the subject, it will still be necessary for us to examine more closely the relation to the means of grace in general which he is thus led to ascribe to absolution.

The power of the keys is, in the unvarying view of Luther, "an office, power, or commandment given by God to the Christian Church through Christ to forgive men (their) sin." Accordingly, the grace of God is announced, or declared, *to individuals* —and, in the very act of such declaration, forgiveness itself is imparted. The benediction pronounced in absolution is not only imprecatory (*imprecativa*), but declarative, effective, collative (*indicativa*, *constitutiva*, *collativa*). The father-confessor, or other administrant, shall say: "I, upon the command of Christ, forgive thee," and this is intended to mean: "I reconcile thy soul with God, I remove (*aufero*) from thee the wrath of God," etc. He shall then also ask the confessing persons if they

[1] Cf. in my—Luther's Lehre von der Kirche, Stuttg., 1853, pp. 26–47; Steitz, die Privatbeichte und Privatabsolution in der luth. Kirche, Frankf., 1854, and, especially, Pfisterer, Luther's Lehre von der Beichte, Stuttg., 1857.

[2] Vol. I., p. 255 sqq., especially p. 259 sqq.; also, Vol. I., pp. 402 (upon the Keys), 294, 303, 305.

believe that his forgiveness is the forgiveness of God. Christ, he argues, did not say: "What I loose in heaven, shall ye also loose on earth"—so that it would be necessary for us first to discover what God looses in heaven; but he says: "If ye do it, it shall be done—it is to be one work (*einerlei*), yours and mine, and not a double work—if ye loose, I have already loosed." The loosing by means of the power of the keys is therefore the "word and decision of God Himself," and we should trust in it most implicitly.[1] Thus, the power of the keys (German: the Key) is never an ineffectual nor a varying power (Key), but its "loosing" is always certain. This does not depend upon the personality of the administrant. Even if the devil should have slipped into the pastoral office and pronounced absolution in the Church and administered the sacrament of the altar according to the command of Christ, we would in such case have received proper absolution, and the real sacrament of the body of Christ. Nor does the certainty of the forgiveness depend upon the disposition or deportment of the individual to whom it is announced. There must, indeed, be contrition in the individual if he is to appropriate the forgiveness in faith;[2] and the appropriating agency is faith itself; but even where this is wanting in the one to whom the absolution is given, the power of the keys has nevertheless done its part, and has neither erred nor lied. The gift was there, but it was not accepted—just as a castle presented to me by a king, has been certainly given to me, even though I do not accept it; or as gold given to another retains its nature even though the latter despises it; or as the sun truly shines and is the real sun even if we should crawl into some dark corner. In this sense, therefore, Luther will hear absolutely nothing of a "conditional key" (*clavis conditionalis*); that is, of a key which should assert that it loosed us if we were penitent and pious, but failed to do so if such were not the case. The absolution is to be given unconditionally, although for its reception there is required the faith which is to lay hold upon this very same sure Word of forgiveness. But this faith, according to Luther, is under all circumstances absolutely necessary for the

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 170 sq., 178. Op. Ex., vii, 52 sq. Erl. Ed., xxi, 17 sqq.; xxxi, 169 sq., 174.

[2] Cf. also, supra, p. 431 sq.

reception of the offered absolution, or, rather, it is the very reception itself. Without it, the gift already bestowed is again lost. "If thou believest, thou hast it; if thou believest not, thou hast nothing." To this extent, therefore, absolution is, after all, conditional: "Every absolution has the *conditio* of faith, for without faith it does not remit, and (yet) it is not on that account an errant key." [1]

If we now inquire *upon what grounds* absolution should be *administered* to particular individuals, we shall not find Luther depending upon the administrant's conviction of the contrition and faith of the person desiring to be absolved, or of his real inner attitude toward God. Of this, the administrant could, for one thing, never be sure, and we would again have an errant key; and, moreover, it is just through the Word of absolution itself that the faith required for its apprehension is to be rightly excited. It is necessary only, which is always assumed as a matter of course, to see to it that the persons applying do not live in open impenitence and sin (see fuller discussion below, in connection with the theory of *excommunication*), and that they themselves confess their sin and express sorrow for it. Nor is the administrant to be disturbed by the fear that the applicant may lack all proper understanding of the saving truth with which absolution has to do. Of this, however, we shall have occasion to speak further when discussing private confession.[2]

This, therefore—the special bestowal of the forgiveness of sins upon individuals through the permanent, established power of the keys—is, according to Luther, the exalted privilege granted to believers under the new covenant, but which had not been enjoyed by the saints under the old covenant.[3]

Luther's view of the *objective certainty* of the forgiveness imparted in absolution, even when faith is wanting, is in perfect analogy with his position as to the objective and real content of the sacraments. *We* may be disposed to ask whether forgiveness can, indeed, be conceived of as an entity objectively present and

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 362; viii, 303; xlvi. 123; xi, 367 sqq.; xxxi, 169, 142, 147 sq. Vol. I., p. 262. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 172; xliv, 165 sqq.; v, 176. Briefe, iv, 482.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 162 sq.; iii, 367. Supra, Vol. I., p. 264.

[3] Vol. I., pp. 266, 397, note; Vol. II., p. 362 sq. Erl. Ed., xx, 192; xxvii, 339. Briefe, iv, 481.

independent of the faith which is to receive it, and whether God can really bestow it, as a treasure, or gold, may be given, in cases where He finds no susceptibility for its reception. We may be inclined to interpret the utterances of Luther as meaning only that the possibility of attaining the forgiving grace of God is here presented to men in a special way (otherwise than in the general preaching of the Gospel). This would, however, be clearly a departure from the position which Luther himself has assumed. He himself gives us no further reply to such questions, no further explanation of his teaching upon the subject.

It is worthy of note, further, that he now no longer, as at first,[1] locates the actual forgiveness upon God's part *before the formal absolution*, regarding the latter then as serving only for the full subjective attestation of the former. On the contrary, God is represented as forgiving only with and in the remission consummated in the act of absolution; and not only the certainty of forgiveness, but forgiveness itself, is attained only by the individual who confidently lays hold upon the Word of absolution. It is, according to the unvarying representation of Luther, only confident faith which has justifying power.[2] The interpretation suggested above would not, indeed, be even thus excluded, but it has, as before observed, not been presented by him.

Some additional considerations are necessary in immediate connection with the general subject of absolution as above presented. First of all, we observe that, according to Luther's habitual manner of dealing with the subject and his entire doctrine concerning the means of grace, forgiveness, or absolution in general, is by no means to be thought of as imparted only in the form of absolution here in question, *i. e.*, that in which the sins of an individual are forgiven directly through the Word spoken above him. It takes place, on the other hand, also in baptism and the Lord's Supper, and, above all, according to Luther, in the simple proclamation of the Gospel message, and hence in every Christian sermon.[3] Thus Luther applies the passage, John xx. 23, and attributes the power of the keys also to the office of the ministry at large, although usually referring them specifically

[1] Vol. I., p. 257 sqq.

[2] Vol. II., p. 426 sqq.

[3] Erl. Ed., xi, 295, 156 sq.; v, 170 sqq.; xlv, 109.

to private absolution;[1] and the latter is frequently included under the general conception of the administration of the Gospel, which embraces also preaching, or under the "oral Word." The Gospel is a *general absolution*. The same Word which is, in preaching, proclaimed publicly and in general terms is then addressed particularly, in (private) absolution, to such individuals as desire it. This is nothing more than declaring the Gospel to a single person, who thus receives comfort in view of the confessed sin.[2] At the same time, Luther by no means desired to exclude the employment of the "public, general absolution," in which the forgiveness of sins is, in express and fixed terms, announced to the assembled congregation in connection with regular divine service, occupying, as it does, an intermediate position between public preaching and private absolution. He expressed his opinion in regard to this when a controversy had arisen on the subject among the clergy of Nuremberg, and himself prepared a liturgical formula for use upon such occasions, in which he prescribes the following language: "I declare * * * all who are now here * * * and with penitence * * * believe in Christ, free," etc. To the objection, that this was conditional, he replied that it was indeed so, just as is every general or private absolution.[3]

In the second place, we must again call attention to the fact that, according to Luther, not only the regularly appointed confessor, or pastor, but *every Christian brother*, may pronounce forgiveness with full authority and perfect validity. Luther repeats this with extraordinary frequency even in his later and latest works. It is his custom, even when himself assisting distressed souls to find the assurance of pardon, to direct them at the same time also to the lay brother. He rejoices that they can have forgiveness thus in the fellowship of believers, wherever two or three are gathered together (Matt. xviii. 19, 20), and that Christ has crowded every corner full of it. He most frequently (as at the very beginning[4]) says that we can secure it from the priest, or, *if necessary*, from any brother—though he not infrequently

[1] Jena, ii, 582 b (cf. supra, p. 86). Erl. Ed., vi, 296; iii, 371; xi, 294 sq. Jena, iv, 362.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxxi. 171; xi, 294 sqq. Briefe, iv, 443 sqq., 481 sqq.

[3] Briefe, iv, 445; vi, 176, 245. Cf. Corp. Reform., iii, 957.

[4] Vid. Vol. I., p. 261.

omits the conditional intermediate clause. By necessity, in this case, he by no means understands such extreme circumstances as sudden emergencies, the unexpected approach of death, etc., when no clergyman can be summoned, as in the somewhat similar instance of lay-baptism, which is thus carefully guarded. On the contrary, he includes, for example, under the term distress of conscience on account of such sins as one would be ashamed to acknowledge in the presence of the pastor, and would rather pour out in humble confession into the bosom of some other trustworthy, pious Christian.[1] He speaks then of consolation given to the distressed one by his brother, of the comforting passages of Scripture which may be quoted, etc., discriminating between such ministrations and "absolution," or the formal official act of the pastor.[2] But yet actual absolution, which in its essential character stands upon the same level, is here also, in his view, consummated. Upon the one hand, he often describes the act of the official confessor simply as a comforting of the distressed penitent; whilst he represents the brother, on the other hand, as by his words of consolation pronouncing forgiveness itself, and even employs for the act of the latter the term "absolution." He himself with great earnestness calls upon Spalatin, when the latter was in distress, to receive absolution (by letter) from him, not as his regular spiritual adviser, but as a brother. "Christ," says he, "speaks through me—He Himself absolves thee." He declares, in general, that a brother's word is "yea" before God, is God's own Word, and just as good as that of the priest. To the section upon confession in the *Visitationsunterricht* for Electoral Saxony, prepared in 1528, he himself in 1538 appended the remark: The reception of absolution from the confessor should be optional—for those who may perhaps prefer to receive it from their pastor, as a public officer of the Church, rather than from another person. So little does he recognize any specific difference between the formal ecclesiastical administration and that "through another."[3] In

[1] Erl. Ed., xxvii, 376; xliv, 107 sqq., 117, 125. Jena, ii, 566 b. Erl. Ed., iii, 366, 370 sqq.; vi, 297; xi, 334 sq.; vi, 341. Jena, iv, 362. Op. Ex., xi, 136, 239; ix, 23.

[2] Erl. Ed., xliv, 108, 112; xlvi, 292.

[3] Erl. Ed., vi, 164 sq. Vol. I., pp. 261, 402 sq. Erl. Ed., xliv, 107 sqq.; vi, 341; v, 170 sq.; xi, 319, 318, 156 sq.; v, 165; xlvi, 123; xlvii, 217 sq. Briefe, v, 680 sq. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 40 sq.

the *Smalcald Articles*, he places side by side with forgiveness through the power of the keys that "through mutual colloquy and the consolation of brethren," according to Matt. xviii. 20. But, in another passage, while citing Matt. xviii. 20 in illustration of ecclesiastical absolution, he deduces that pronounced by brethren also from the promise in John xx. 23 and from the power of the keys. The keys, he asserts, are distributed to every house; we have "liberty to administer the keys privately."[1] He even applies the term "office" (*Amt*) to the power which private members of the Church possess to render service to one another in announcing the forgiveness of their sins (according to Matt. ix. 8): "God has bound us together by this office, in order that one Christian may pronounce to another," etc.[2] He can consistently speak thus, since the keys have, according to his unvarying teaching, been given to the entire Church, and hence also to individual members for their mutual fellowship. The declarations in Matt. xviii. 18 and John xx. 21 sqq. apply to *all* disciples of Christ. All Christians have, wherever two or three of them are gathered together in Christ's name, "precisely all the power which St. Peter and all the apostles (possessed)."[3]

No one should, however, presume to exercise this common power publicly, unless publicly elected for such purpose by the congregation. I may, therefore, pronounce an absolution for my neighbor, who reveals to me his peculiar trouble, but I must do so only "privately" (*heimlich*). I dare not seat myself in the Church to hear confession.[4] The position here taken is thus in complete harmony with the utterances of Luther, particularly in his later years, in denunciation of presumptuous exercise of the public ministry of the Word, or of official duties in the Church, without a proper call. The practice of private absolution may, indeed, when exercised without regard to the special necessities of particular brethren or to their peculiar personal relations toward one another, become such an unauthorized assumption of authority. But, considered in itself, it naturally falls, not under

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 136; xiii, 334 sq. Jena, iv, 362. Erl. Ed., xi, 318; xliv, 107, 125.

[2] Erl. Ed., v, 176; cf. also xi, 338.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxviii, 309, 414. Jena, ii, 582 b. Erl. Ed., xiv, 173 sq.; xi, 318, 339; xxxi, 371, and very especially, vi, 297 sq.; xxvi, 165 sq.

[4] Erl. Ed., xi, 318.

the head of congregational, ecclesiastical acts, or *public* institutions and ordinances, but it is similar to the private use of the Word in general, which it is the province of the brother to make in dealing with his brother, or of a father in relation to his household. It is to be observed, also, that Luther was never called upon by force of circumstances to bear specific testimony against any abuse of the privilege. The fanatical sects did not undertake to hold confession, but would hear nothing of confession and private absolution. We recognize, upon the other hand, in the writings of the Reformer during the present period, the constant effort to avoid the assumptions of the papal priesthood, with *its* confessional practices and *its* power of the keys.

But, in additon to the public preaching of the Word and the absolution which it already involves, *private absolution* retains for Luther an exalted and peculiar value, from the fact that in it forgiveness is imparted to me as one particular person—"privately, specially, individually." Thus I can here be right certain of it, as intended *for me*, and can grasp it for myself, whereas in the congregation it floats out over the whole assembly, and may, indeed, reach me with the rest, but I am still not so sure of it as when addressed to me alone. Hence, too, it follows that I should first unburden my heart to the person from whom I desire to receive absolution, telling him all the troubles which oppress me, seeking his advice, so that I may receive the absolution with direct reference to the particular emergency. Luther directs our attention here again to the significance which he ascribes in general to the mediation and application of the divine agency through human instrumentality (*e. g.*, through the *spoken* Word [1]), and, still further, to the special significance, even for the mediation and personal experience of salvation itself, which he attributes, within the Church, to the communion of the saints and their mutual influence upon one another in the service of Christ. In society, says Luther, among my neighbors and brethren, and not in a corner, nor in the wilderness, nor in a solitary cell, am I to seek for what I need. Hence he cites Matt. xviii. 20 in support, particularly of private absolution, but also of the formal ordinance of the Church, and often designedly designates the pastor as a neighbor, or brother. Nor are we to overlook the influence, in

[1] Supra, p. 494.

this personal interview of the pastor or brother with the candidate for absolution, of "the living voice," to which reference has been already made. And we recall, still further, Luther's own experience, especially while yet in the monastery.[1]

It was, therefore, not without a substantial reason that Luther, while allowing liberty for the exercise of the power of the keys by laymen in private, yet did not desire to see the public ordinance of the confessional neglected, but, on the contrary, always represented the latter as the primary, orderly and regular method. Here, he held, we have particular persons, of whom we know that they have been especially, and for each one among us, entrusted by God with the ministry of the keys; and that they have, furthermore, as office-bearers in the Church of Christ, a "particular commandment" for the rendering of such service.[2]

It is especially timid persons and those in spiritual distress who are urgently advised to seek private absolution at the hands of the pastor or, in case of necessity, of any Christian brother. But he declares, also, that it is useful and necessary for every one, since we never rise to such a height as no longer to need the Word of forgiveness.[3]

It is chiefly for the sake of the *absolution* that Luther so earnestly commends the retention of PRIVATE CONFESSION as an ordinance of the Christian Church.[4] He himself interprets the word "*beichten*" (or "*be-ich-ten*") as meaning "confess." There must be such a continual inward "confession" (*Beichte*) upon the part of the believer in the presence of God. There is in every repetition of the Lord's Prayer a constantly reiterated and also a public "confession." And every individual must likewise confess his sin to his neighbor whom he has injured. But we speak now of "that private confession (*Beichte*) in which one person takes another aside to a separate place and relates to him what his need and burden are, in order that he may receive from the latter a comforting word," etc.[5] Under the term *Beichte*,

[1] Erl. Ed., xi, 157 sq.; xxvi, 310 sq. Briefe, iv, 445. Jena, iv, 362 b; xliv, 108 sqq.; xxvii, 369, 377; xi, 231; xxxi, 170. Supra, p. 494. Vol. I., p. 62.

[2] Jena, iv, 362. Erl. Ed., v, 165, 170, 174.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxv, 138, 363; xxvi, 310.

[4] Cf. Vol. I., pp. 402, 463 sq.

[5] Erl. Ed., xxvi, 307 sq.; xxix, 352 sqq.; xxiii, 86 sqq.

he further explains, are included, according to the prevalent ecclesiastical usage, two things, *i. e.*, our work, the confession and the seeking for consolation; and God's work, the declaring free from sin.[1]

This technical confession is, indeed, not absolutely necessary, as is that first mentioned, but it is nevertheless an exceedingly *valuable exercise*, which none but unworthy Christians and coarse swine despise. It is such by virtue of the second element, which has been appointed to afford us just such comfort, and which is the principal part of it and its special object. It is such, however, also by virtue of the personal confession which it involves, although the latter has not been specifically included in it by Christ in establishing the ordinance. The burden resting upon the heart must be revealed, the sin lamented, in order that the person applied to may declare forgiveness for it. The shame and self-humiliation connected with such confession are also very salutary. The formal confession affords an opportunity also for the instruction of plain, simple-minded people and for discovering whether they know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, etc. Even the rehearsal of such parts of the Catechism belongs to the "*Be-ich-ten.*" Particularly is the truth preached from the pulpit to be "brought into operation" properly, in individual cases, only through the confessional.[2] Especially should confession be practiced before communion, not as a necessary or compulsory matter, but as very useful, in order that the people may be assisted in that self-examination which the apostle enjoins, and may not approach the Table of the Lord without understanding, faith or penitence.[3]

But by no means shall this ordinance ever be again allowed to become an *instrument of torture*, requiring the enumeration of all particular sins. It is enough if the applicant confess himself a sinner, and mention the special sins in view of which he particularly desires absolution. Of such persons as already fully know what sin is, as, for example, ministers and Melanchthon, an enumeration of sins is not to be at all expected. "It must be

[1] Erl. Ed., xxiii, 88.

[2] Vol. I., p. 463. Erl. Ed., xxix, 357 sq.; xxvi, 305 sqq.; xi, 294 sq., 157 sqq; xxiii, 86, 40; xxviii, 283; xxvii, 367 sqq.; xxv, 138; xxvi, 311.

[3] Jena, ii, 591. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 35; xi, 180 sq., 185; vi, 342; xxv, 138. Briefe, iv, 283 sq.

sufficient," said Luther already in 1518, "for the priest that I desire confession and absolution, without its being necessary for him to have a positive assurance (certainty) of my penitence and my faith." [1]

Confession must, moreover, always be left optional, dependent upon the needs of the individual—even that preceding the communion. He himself, says Luther, unwilling as he would be to surrender the privilege of confession, yet once in a while takes the communion without first confessing, in order that he may not be tempted to exalt the custom into a necessary matter of conscience, and in order to show his contempt for the devil.[2]

If we inquire, finally, what is the *relation of absolution to the other means of grace*, we will naturally recall what has been said above of the analogy between it and the sacraments; and we must now further add that not only does Luther frequently associate it with the latter, but that in it, as a special act applied to us through the external Word, Christ seems to him to be peculiarly tangible, or within the range of our powers of apprehension; and hence he includes it among "visible things and signs." He is even willing now to concede: "We must confess that repentance is a *sacrament*, inasmuch as the *absolution of the Keys* and the faith of the penitent belong to it; for it has within it the promise and faith of forgiveness," etc.[3] But he still fails to find in it a peculiar *visible* sign, or any sign in addition to the Word of promise itself. The Word pronounced in private absolution he regards, as we have seen, as falling under the general conception of the Word; and even the spoken Word itself he regards as, in a wider sense, a "*forma visibilis*." He therefore now always speaks, in other connections, adopting the strict conception of a "sacrament," of but two sacraments, and in connection with them, of the Word, including the Word of absolution.[4]

But it is proper that, in immediate connection with absolution,

[1] Erl. Ed., xi, 160, 295; xxiii, 85; xxvii, 374; xxi, 18; xxvi, 306; xxxi, 162 sq.; xx, 186.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxvii, 353 sqq.; xvii, 148 sq. Jena, ii, 591. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 40, 35, 195; ii, 251.

[3] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 82; xlvi, 295; lxv, 173. Jena, i, 578. Cf. Vol. I., p. 403, upon sacraments in the wider sense.

[4] Vol. I., p. 403. Erl. Ed., xxviii, 418; xxx, 371.

or the *loosing key*, we should consider also the nature and office of the other, or *binding key*, *i. e.*, CHRISTIAN EXCOMMUNICATION; not only because the two keys are closely attached to one another in the designating term and in their significance, but also because the binding likewise belongs, as we shall see, to the administration of the means of grace in the congregation.

"Binding" and "retaining" sin are in Luther's conception (compare Matt. xvi. 19 with John xx. 23) perfectly synonymous terms. He says: "Binding and loosing represent sin retained and remitted"—to which he adds the remark, that a key serves principally for opening, and so Christ and the Church are more inclined to loose than to bind.[1]

The binding power of the keys is represented as exercised already in the general preaching of the Gospel, which is said to bind all the unbelieving.[2] Luther even in one passage, when commenting upon Matt. xvi. 19, speaks of a private condemnation (*privata damnatio*) by a brother. This consists, in his view, in fraternal remonstrance (*arguere*), just as the fraternal absolution consists in the administering of consolation.[3] But, in other passages, he always understands by it the excommunication administered in accordance with the instructions of Christ as found in Matt. xviii. 15 sqq., *i. e.*, "that special function of the keys which is, by its very nature, public."[4]

This binding is, however, designed to be exercised only in case of *public* sins, which are clearly manifest to the Church, and of which the offender, despite all fraternal and ecclesiastical admonition, refuses to make penitent confession or to repent. It must therefore, from its very nature, be administered as a public, congregational act, as Christ has commanded. The open sinner is to be first fraternally admonished; then the matter is to be brought before the congregation, in order that here every one may condemn the crime. If the offender does not then heed, he is to be excommunicated, and treated as a heathen and a publican.[5] He is hereby excluded also from the outward fellowship of the congregation, dare not act as sponsor

[1] Erl. Ed., iii, 364. Jena, iv, 362.
[2] Briefe, iv, 482. Jena, iv, 362 b.
[3] Jena, iv, 362; cf. 362 b. [4] Jena, iv, 362 b.
[5] Erl. Ed., iii, 364; xxvii, 363 sq.; xliv, 80 sq.; xxxi, 175 sqq.

at the baptism of a child, nor receive the communion. But this verdict of the Church involves, above all, for the excommunicated person, that his sin will now bring upon him *death and perdition*. He is deprived of all the grace to which Christians are entitled, of all the gifts and grace of the Holy Spirit, is not delivered from sin and death by the blood of Christ, etc. Thus Luther now embraces both the outer and the inner excommunication[1] in the act, when properly administered in accordance with Matt. xviii. This he designates a "spiritual" excommunication. The act of the Church in pronouncing excommunication no longer consists for him in the bare outward exclusion, or the mere withdrawal of outward fellowship, regarded as only a *sign* that the soul of the offender has been given over to the devil;[2] but the Church itself pronounces upon the sinner the verdict of eternal death. And of this verdict Luther most emphatically declares, just as of the absolving proclamation of the loosing key, that it is thereby pronounced by God Himself, and is valid before Him. The binding key dare no more than the other be considered an errant key.[3] This condemnation is, of course, as is abundantly manifest from other utterances of Luther, not to be construed as leading absolutely and unconditionally to eternal death The sinner is to continue given over to death only upon the supposition that he persists in his impenitence instead of seeking again deliverance from his sin. Of this we shall hereafter have occasion to speak further.

But, with all this acknowledgment of the Church's authority, Luther was still as far as ever from making salvation dependent upon human mediation or human caprice, after the manner of Roman Catholicism. The verdict spoken of dare be pronounced only *upon the ground of sin and impenitence* plainly manifested by the sinner himself. To the declaration, that God binds Himself also to the verdict of the Church, Luther adds: "if it is rightly employed" (that is, according to the prescribed method and only in the case of such open offenders). Otherwise he asserts, not that the binding key errs, but that the parties pronouncing excommunication do not at all have the right key. There remained, therefore, for all true believers who suffered

[1] Vol. I., pp. 277, 343. [2] Vol. I., p. 277.

[3] Erl. Ed., xliv, 81 sqq., 86 sq.; xxxi, 178, 169, 172; xxv, 140.

injustice at the hands of the priests, the completely-consoling assurance that their excommunication was not at all regarded as such by God, and that they might still be sure of their absolution in His sight.[1] And even in the case of those rightfully excommunicated, the divine verdict of death is, according to Luther's entire teaching in regard to the forgiveness of sins, at once canceled, whenever the excluded person again penitently lays hold of the Word of forgiveness as presented even in the public preaching of the Gospel.[2]

The question now arises very naturally, what peculiar significance then actually attaches to the verdict whose validity has been so strongly asserted, or *what effect does it actually produce?* Sins are, in any event, "retained" only because they have been "bound"; but would they not be so bound even without the official declaration of the Church? Luther himself says that the excommunicated sinner "remains" in a lost condition.[3] He is, accordingly, already in such a condition before the verdict is pronounced against him by the Church. Moreover, sinners are said to be already bound through the ordinary preaching of the Gospel. They are even, as Luther says, bound already before God by their very sins, and in consequence of their refusal to come to receive the Word of forgiveness.[4] Yet Luther certainly means to teach that excommunication produces a real effect, and that, too, with respect to the relation of the individual under discipline to God, and God's attitude toward him. We may attempt to express the idea of Luther as follows: The measure of the sin and guilt of such transgressors becomes in God's sight entirely full, and the verdict of the hitherto long-suffering God upon them entirely fixed, only after they have cast to the winds His sorest threatening in the verdict of the binding key and His admonitions presented through the mouth of their brethren and the congregation. We look in vain, however, in the writings of Luther himself for any special elucidation of the question.

[1] Erl. Ed., xliv, 88; xxxi, 175; xxiv, 205 sq.

[2] Briefe, iv, 4821 "In case the person bound by the ban of the Church (die Jurisdiktion) comes again through the preaching of the Gospel to obedience and faith, he is already forgiven by God, but should then also seek again reconciliation with the Church."

[3] Erl. Ed., xliv, 81.

[4] Cf. Erl. Ed., xi, 329; iii, 170.

We shall have occasion to speak further of excommunication as a public, congregational act of discipline, in connection with the doctrine concerning the Church. But we must now, finally, trace the significance of the "*Bann*," or binding thus effected, to its appropriate and designed result; and it is only as we do so that the relation of the binding key to the subjects considered in the present chapter will become manifest. This ordinance also is always designed, in the special and gracious purpose of God in its appointment, to lead, and that in a peculiarly startling and powerful way, to repentance—by pronouncing the verdict of death, to open the way for the terrified conscience back again to life—to become a wholesome medicine and help in escaping from sin. We have found in absolution a special exercise and application of the Gospel; the office of the binding key is but a prosecution of the work of the Law. The two keys combined are "'*executores*,' executors and active employers of the Gospel, which preaches precisely these two things, repentance and the forgiveness of sins." [1]

To the further ecclesiastical acts which the Romish Church designates as sacraments Luther still denied that character, and for the same reason which he had adduced in the *Praeludium de captivitate Babylonica*.[2] *Marriage* and the *priesthood* "are orders otherwise holy enough in themselves," but we dare not make sacraments out of them. The former has already been discussed,[3] and in regard to ordination, we shall speak in the succeeding chapter. Of the Romish *confirmation* and *extreme unction* the Gospels, he says, know nothing, and he expressly denies the applicability of Acts viii. 17 to the former. While regarding it, at all events, an excellent custom to visit the sick, and admonish and pray with them, he would leave the anointing with oil optional; only insisting that it be not regarded as a sacrament. He thus, at the first attempted reformation in Electoral Brandenburg, in which it was the aim to retain old customs as far as possible, gave his consent to the retention of an anointing of the sick; for it was at the same retention of an anointing of the sick; for it was at the same time distinctly denied that this was a sacrament, and no consciences were burdened by it. He expresses himself in the same way at that time in regard to confirmation, which was there likewise

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 130, 178 sq; cf. also xi, 329.
[2] Vol. I., p. 403 sqq.
[3] Cf. supra, p. 481.

retained. Yet he advised against the recognition of the custom of anointing in the printed order, since this professed to furnish a reformation based upon the *Scriptures*. In regard to the supposed connection between the ceremony and Jas. v. 14 sq. and Mk. vi. 13, he expressed himself as heretofore.[1] We have, with the practices last mentioned, entered the sphere of those outward customs[2] of which Luther declares, that they do not make any one holy and have not been appointed by God, but may nevertheless be useful and very appropriate.[3] Upon one occasion he thus allowed feet-washing to pass as an appropriate and ancient Christian custom, when it had been recognized in the order of the Church at Sonnewald under a certain Lord of Minkwitz. He objects only to calling it, as is there done, a "soul-bath." In other connections, he sees the true feet-washing, which the Lord commanded, in the continual ministry of Christian love toward one's brethren.[4]

[1] Vol. I., p. 406 sq. Upon Confirmation: Erl. Ed., xx, 64; vii, 172; xxv, 71; lxv, 173. Briefe, ii, 240, 490; v, 307. Upon Unction: Erl. Ed., xxv, 71; xxx, 371. Briefe, v, 233 sq., 307.

[2] Vol. I., p. 404.

[3] Cf. Erl. Ed., xxv, 378, 383 sq.

[4] Briefe, ii, 620: Cf. Seckendorf, Hist. Luth., I., § 157, Add. 1. Erl. Ed., ii, 227 sq.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCH.

THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS—AN OBJECTIVE REALITY—WORD AND SACRAMENTS—THE KEYS—THE MINISTRY—PRAYER—ENDURANCE OF CROSS—PIETY OF MEMBERS—EXTERNAL CEREMONIES—FORM OF PASTORAL OFFICE—THE CHURCH HOLY—EMBRACES BELIEVERS IN ALL PLACES—PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH—OBJECT OF FAITH—RELATION OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT TO CHURCH—MAY ENCOURAGE PREACHING OF THE WORD AND FORBID BLASPHEMOUS PRACTICES—SHOULD PRESERVE HARMONY—LIMITS OF AUTHORITY IN THIS SPHERE—CONGREGATIONAL CHARACTER AND RIGHTS—LUTHER'S MISSION NOT IN SECULAR ORGANIZATION.

WHAT that Church really is in which God dispenses His means of grace, and into which He gathers His believing and redeemed people, had been already recognized by Luther with remarkable clearness at the time when he was repelled and cast out by the Romish hierarchy. From that time forward, he did not deviate in the least from his general conception of the Church nor from the main outlines of his doctrine in regard to it, however impossible it may be to overlook certain important modifications of his view upon separate points as new practical questions and necessities were forced upon his attention.[1]

The Church is, for Luther, nothing more nor less than the COMMUNITY (*Gemeine*) OF THE SAINTS; and this means simply the community of believers, who are sanctified by faith in Christ—the assembly, or people (nation), of Christians who have Christ as their Head. It exists, however, and can exist, only where the Gospel is preached and the sacraments rightly administered. By these, as by outward signs, the Christian congregation is recognized. In the preaching of the Word and in the celebration of the sacraments it acknowledges its relation to its Lord; and

[1] Cf. my work, "Luthers Lehre von der Kirche."

through these same means of grace all the saints secure the new life in Christ and their constant strengthening and renewal. After the conflict with the fanatical sects, the sacraments received, in addition to the Word, further and very special recognition in their significance for the Christian life, and thus also for the stability and life of the Church. But, even when treating specifically of the Church, the principal thing always remains, for Luther, the Word of God, without which, indeed, the sacraments are nothing, which in cases of necessity brings men, even without the latter, into the fellowship of salvation, and which must be continually employed and continually operative in its divine power. Through it the Church at large (*Gemeine*) is conceived, born, nourished, etc. "Wherever the Gospel is, there (*da*) must also be a holy Christian Church." [1]

In the possession and dispensation of the means of grace, the Church stands related to the individual believer as an *objective reality*. It is his mother. It conceives, bears and trains up an innumerable host of children through the Gospel and the Holy Spirit.[2] Yet the Church itself is always simply the community of existing believers. It is "the holy believers, and the sheep who hear their shepherd's voice." The term, "communion of saints," in the *Apostles' Creed* is simply intended to declare what "the Church" is, and it would be better if the word "*Gemeine*" (community) were to stand in the German version instead of "*Gemeinschaft*" (fellowship). It is just to this community of believers that we are to go to secure the forgiveness of sins. In *this* Church, *i. e.*, in the Christian community at large, sins are daily and abundantly forgiven.[3] These principles define also the conception of individual churches. "Church means the number of believers in a city, country, or the whole world." [4] And this Church, or Christian community, is nothing less exalted than the gate of heaven itself. It is the place, or the people (nation), where God dwells in order, through His Word and His sacraments, to lead us to heaven.[5]

That the Church, or Christian community, is to be *recognized*

[1] Vol. I., pp. 295 sqq., 364 sqq., 427 sq. Erl. Ed., xxiv, 327; vi, 67. Op. Ex., xviii, 280. Erl. Ed., xliv, 24; xxxi, 374; xxxv, 338, 359 sqq.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxi, 101; xliv, 5. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 257, 261.

[3] Ibid., xxi, 162; xxiii, 249, 254; xxv, 142; xxi, 13.

[4] Ibid., xliv, 24; xxxi, 123. [5] Op. Ex., vii, 181 188.

by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments may be proved yet more distinctly, according to Luther, as follows: It does not follow, upon the one hand, that, because persons are by baptism, even when received in infancy, regenerated, sanctified, and admitted to the community in which salvation is experienced, *all* the baptized will always be members of that community. Such persons cease to be really members, and are so yet only in name, if they become impenitent sinners and enemies of the truth. They thus inwardly sever themselves from the community. They are not only branches that must be cast out, but are already cast out. They are no more members of the Church, the bride of Christ, but a rebellious whore—a horde of the devil.[1] Luther makes no reference here to that return to the recognition of the baptismal covenant which he regards as possible to the penitent; but he recognizes also a falling away upon the part of baptized Christians so complete as to leave no further hope of a return. Yet, upon the other hand, although not all baptized persons really belong to the Church, still, he holds, where baptism and the Word are found, there are at least some "saints," and hence certainly a Church. He points, in extreme cases, to the children yet in their cradles, and appeals particularly to the maxim, that the Word is nowhere entirely without fruit, a maxim which, indeed, when asserted with such assurance, leads us back to the obscure questions as to the agency of the Spirit in connection with the Word.[2] Where the means of grace are entirely wanting, he sees, on the contrary, no possibility of a Church or of a fellowship in the blessings of salvation, and, in this sense, approves the statement, that outside of the Church there is no salvation.[3]

The question here arises, in how far the means of grace are yet present in their power and blessing where the Word is preached in a *corrupted form* and the sacraments *improperly administered.* Luther acknowledged that the Lord's Supper was received effectually in the Church of the Middle Ages, despite the mutilation of the ordinance of Christ by the withholding of the cup from the laity. The Word he holds to be still effective for the generation and preservation of saints, although some have it in a

[1] Vol. I., pp. 364, 367, 428. Erl. Ed., xlix, 262 sqq., 310; xxvi, 26; lxv, 174; i, 12. Op. Ex., xx, 165.

[2] Vol. I., p. 366; Vol. II., p. 491 sq.

[3] Erl. Ed., ix, 292.

perfectly pure, and others in a somewhat corrupted form. He saw evidences of its effectual working, by means of its central doctrine of salvation in Christ alone, in the case of particular individuals even under the Papacy—in a decisive way, at least in the hour of death.[1] He has, however, left us no further definitions, or distinctions, as to the limitations of the agency of the Word under such circumstances.

Considerable interest attaches also to the question, which of the external associations of professed believers calling themselves "churches" are entitled to be so called. Luther refuses to allow the name of "Church," or "people of God," despite the continued presence of the means of grace, to any community which has become, in its general, dominant spirit, government or confession, perverted from the truth. Of this he finds an illustration in the Papal Church (see below). Yet even in such a church he joyfully recognizes such individuals as are, through the means of grace, kept in fellowship with Christ, and thus even in a church which is only improperly and falsely so called he yet recognizes the continued presence of a little company which is not called, but really *is*, a Church.[2]

The above are, according to Luther, the fundamental elements which constitute the Church and the signs by which it is to be recognized.

We have seen in the preceding chapter that salvation, or forgiveness, is to be imparted or denied in the Church in a very special way to individuals through the specific employment of the keys which have been entrusted to the Church. Luther, in this spirit, further says, that believers constitute the Christian Church because they have the sacraments and absolution.[3] And in one of the finest and richest of his expositions of the signs by which the people of God are to be recognized, and of the saving instrumentalities by which the Holy Spirit effects their sanctification and vivification,[4] he adds to the Word, baptism and the Lord's Supper, as a fourth means, the employment of the *loosing and binding keys*. They should be made use of wherever the Church of Christ exists. That he does not, however, include this

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 359; supra, p. 270 sqq.

[2] Erl. Ed., l, 9 sqq.; xxvi, 28. Op. Ex., iii, 56; v, 101 sq, 105.

[3] Erl. Ed., xlvii, 161.

[4] Ibid., xxv, 363; cf. 376.

in his fundamental definitions of the Church, is to be explained by the fact that this exercise of the keys is, for one thing, already embraced in the proper and complete dispensing of the Word, and that it is, on the other hand, at least not so necessary and essential that believers and saints could not be generated and preserved without it. Furthermore, the outward discipline administered through the binding key could not, inasmuch as it is an act of believers themselves and an enjoined sign of their sanctification, be included among the constituent elements of the Church (cf., on the contrary, confessions of the Reformed Church); for he was concerned, above all else, to recognize the objective realities which God bestows, and through which He generates and nourishes, and not any deed or service performed by man himself.

In the Christian community at large, or Church, these means of grace are, together with the keys, to be administered publicly and regularly by *ministers* (*Diener*) *expressly called* for the purpose, who are to feed the congregation with the Word of God. The sacraments are likewise, as we have seen, by their very nature, public acts, and the Word of God requires to be proclaimed by word of mouth, and hence also publicly for all. Private absolution is proffered to all, since the individual does not find himself directed simply, or in the first instance, to seek out a brother who may administer it to him; but the keys, which have been given to the Church in its totality, have also, on account of, and for the benefit of, the entire body, specially-called administrants (*Diener*) to whom each separate member of the body may apply.

This brings us to the doctrine of the ecclesiastical office (*Amt*). The conception of the "office" is here a narrower one than that attaching to the term in those separate passages in which Luther calls the authority and administration of the keys which belong to every Christian an office.[1] It is a term indicating public functions in general, and with it is always associated, in Luther's use of it, the idea of regular, permanent and formal appointment. "Office," says he, "means something appointed, such as there must be in every orderly administration of affairs among men, in order that it may accomplish various appointed and enjoined

[1] Vol. II., p. 527.

tasks in the name of Him who holds the supreme authority, or in the interest of an entire congregation, that through it the other members may be benefited.[1]

That such special officials, pastors, and bishops are to administer the means of grace, and to this end must be regularly called, Luther taught from the very beginning. He insisted most strenuously upon this requirement in his polemical writings against the Fanatics, declaring that no one should under any circumstances presume to preach publicly who could not produce a mediate call from God, or—which was of course never to be looked for—an immediate call attested by miracles. Thus the community of believers falls for him into two sections, preachers and the laity.[2]

If we now more closely scrutinize his entire theory of this office and calling, we shall observe that, whilst he now felt himself called upon to emphasize chiefly the authority and dignity of the office, yet *it* also remained for him in its main features unchanged.

The fundamental doctrine of the priestly character of all Christians, as, in their baptism, incorporated (*eingeleibt*) in Christ, the Priest, through faith, remains unaltered, and includes, indeed, particularly the right and authority to teach the Word of God. We have been already told that thus the keys also belong to the Church at large and all its members; and it is even said that the "preaching-office" belongs to all.[3] But it is then at once argued further: But not all can preach, but one must speak for the whole multitude. What would be the result, he asks, if every one wanted to talk and no one would yield to his neighbor? "They must commit it," says he, "or allow it to be committed, to one person." "There must be one who conducts the (preaching of) the Word upon the instructions, and with the consent, of the others, who yet all, by their hearing of the message preached, bear testimony to the Word, and thus also instruct others." For this purpose, therefore, particular individuals, to whom God has, as Paul says in Eph. iv. 11 sqq., given special gifts and adaptedness for such office, should be selected from the body at large. It is, indeed, mainly to meet the requirements of this office that

[1] Erl. Ed., ix, 219 sq.

[2] Supra, pp. 90 sqq., 94.

[3] Vol. I., pp. 353, 361, 415; Vol. II., p. 86. Erl. Ed., xxviii, 33; xxxi, 349; xl, 172 sq.; xlvii, 169 sqq., 161.

the gifts and powers spoken of have been bestowed.[1] And whenever such individuals have been regularly called out of the general body of priests for this particular ministry, they have already, in this their call, the "proper *ordination*" (*Weihe*), since the latter is nothing more than "a commandment, commission and calling to the office of the Christian Church." "Clerical rank is a ministry and calling of ministers of the Church" (*Ordo est ministerium et vocatio ministrorum ecclesiae*). "We shall see how we pastors can, on the ground of our baptism and the Word of God, be ordained and confirmed (in our office) without their (the Papists') chrism, by being elected and called." For this purpose, as was the custom of the apostles, the laying on of hands may be employed, in connection with prayer; and there is no doubt that such prayer will bear fruit, in accordance with Matt. xviii. 19. The laying on of hands serves also to publicly ratify and attest the union between the pastor, or bishop, and his Church—that they will listen to him and that he will teach them—as a notary public attests secular matters, or as a pastor, in solemnizing a marriage, thereby ratifies, or attests, the union of the parties concerned.[2] If, at any time thereafter, one so called shall cease to preach and exercise the office of the ministry, he takes his place again in the common ranks and is nothing more than any ordinary Christian.[3]

Of the particular forms to be observed in the calling of men to this office, and of the persons properly authorized to represent the entire body of the Church in the transaction, we shall hereafter have occasion to speak. At this point we stop only to remark, that the calling mediated through governments, princes, cities, etc., is regarded by Luther just as truly a proper calling as that of the first bishops by the apostles, and of modern bishops by their predecessors. The Church is "not at all bound to a regular succession of bishops, as claimed by the Papacy." He admonishes the person receiving such a call: "Thou shalt consider the voice of the community (*reipublicae*) the voice of God and shalt obey."[4]

[1] Erl. Ed., xl, 170 sq., 174; xlvii, 161; xvii, 250, 241; xv, 364 sq.; ix, 220.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 361, 373, 405 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 348, 356 sq., 359. Jena, i, 578 b. Erl. Ed., lxv, 174; vi, 9; xxvi, 105. Upon the form of ordination, Tischr., ii, 383 sq. Erl. Ed., lxiv, 290 sqq.

[3] Erl. Ed., xi, 171 sq.

[4] Comm. ad Gal., i, 30 sq. Erl. Ed., xii, 49; xxxi, 356. Op. Ex., iii, 114.

The office of the ministry, however, though having the basis and origin indicated, has been *instituted by God Himself*. Whoever has been inducted into it in the manner described must be regarded as one whom God Himself has called and consecrated. The rank, or order ("*Stand*"), which "has the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments," or (as Luther, adopting the traditional term, calls it) the "spiritual rank," has been established and instituted by God.[1] Luther so maintains, even when explaining the nature and basis of the office by means of the logical deduction of its necessity to which we have above referred. We may, however, in accordance with all the preceding, summarize his entire view in regard to this divine institution in the following particulars: The Word, together with the sacraments, has been bestowed upon and committed to the Church by God and Christ. It is the gracious will and the requirement of God that the latter, and particularly also the Word, be publicly employed.[2] Preachers are needed, through whom the divine Word may be proclaimed everywhere and constantly, may reach posterity, and may, especially, be presented to the minds of uninstructed youth and the common people.[3] To this end, the very nature of the case absolutely requires, in order that all things may be done in becoming order,[4] and the work of God not come to nought in the midst of disgraceful confusion, that there be distinct individuals to attend to the public preaching of the Word, etc. In order that we may have such, God Himself endows some men with peculiar talent for such work and points them out to us as suitable persons to undertake it. Thus Christ Himself sent out His first great preachers, the inspired apostles, and they, in accordance with the divine will, appointed others to the preaching-office. Thus, also, is this office always to continue in the congregation. Such persons, therefore, as are called by the Church, upon her recognition of the divine will and the divine gifts, are really appointed by God. It was only in his later writings that Luther so strenuously maintained that such persons should therefore be received as *the called of God*, although he then still explained the mediation of the divine through the human calling in the same way as before.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 219; xl, 171; xxv, 346; ix, 220; xx, 8 sq.

[2] In regard to the Word, cf. supra, pp. 242, 494.

[3] Erl. Ed., viii, 224. [4] 1 Cor. xiv. 40. Erl. Ed., xii, 346.

We find special emphasis laid also in the later, as compared with the earlier, utterances of Luther upon the gifts, or talents, by the bestowal of which God Himself provides for the congregation, or those who control its affairs, men properly endowed. Thus, for example, he acknowledges the evangelical preachers of Erfurt as real ministers of Christ Himself, and the Church at that place as a properly-constituted one, because the former have been called by the council and are learned and highly gifted men, anointed with the Holy Spirit.[1] He always insisted, moreover, that men rightly called, even though lacking the proper spirit, should be recognized as regular ministers on account of the call which they have received and the divine means of grace which they administer. "Let him be what he may and such as he can be. Since he is in office, and is tolerated by the majority, do thou, too, be content. His personality does not make the Word of God and the sacraments either worse or better for thee; for what he says and does is not anything of his own, but Christ says and does it all, in so far as he continues to rightly teach and perform his official acts—although, of course, the Church should not tolerate open vices. But do thou thyself be satisfied, and let the matter go, since thou alone canst not be the whole multitude."[2]

The *special blessing of God* accompanies, in Luther's view, the exercise of the preaching-office by men properly called to it; for in the possession and certainty of their divine calling they are able to achieve large results, whereas those who force themselves into such positions in a disorderly way and against the will of God, as intruders and leaders of factions, must lack, in their undertakings, the grace of God and the success that comes from Him. "Although they proclaim some salutary things, yet they do not edify."[3] Even the reading of the divine Word in private is, as we have heard, not so productive of results as the Word upon the lips of the public and specially authorized preacher.[4] The charge was brought against this teaching of Luther by those who despised the preaching-office, that its advocates "would thus establish again a spiritual tyranny over the Church, and place themselves in seats of authority and power, as the Pope formerly did." In response to this, he confesses that he is him-

[1] Briefe, vi, 181 sq., 180. [2] Erl. Ed., xxv, 366.
[3] Op. Ex., xvi, 199 sq. Erl. Ed., viii, 300; xv, 4, 9. Comm. ad Gal., i, 34.
[4] Vol. II., 494. Erl. Ed., iv, 401.

self afraid that such may be the case; but, he adds, the beginning of such a calamity will be seen in the despising and banishment of true preachers of the Word, which may lead God in His anger to raise up veritable tyrants.[1]

Thus, in the passage in which Luther speaks of the three means of grace and of the keys as the fourth, he proceeds to say, that the Church may be known, in the fifth place, by the fact that it ordains, or calls, ministers (*Kirchendiener*) and has offices to fill.[2] He even, in one passage, defines the Church as the "the whole multitude (*Haufen*) of the baptized and believing who belong to a pastor or bishop."[3] He insists particularly, also, that the pastors or bishops already in office shall participate in the induction of every new candidate into the ministry. As publicly and regularly appointed witnesses of the divine Word they are thus especially to approve the doctrine of the candidate so ordained, to receive him into their fellowship, and to confirm his appointment by the laying on of hands.[4]

Yet the pastor is, for Luther, never anything more than the *public administrant* of that which belongs to the entire congregation, appointed by the congregation and ordained of God. It is only by a misuse of language that he is called a priest, by which term, when used, we should understand, in accordance with the original meaning of the word, not what is now meant by a priest, but an "elder" (πρεσβυτερος).[5] He exercises spiritual authority publicly and officially—not in outward dominion, of which there should be nothing in the Church, but in administering the Word and through it nourishing the flock. He administers the keys, but they have to do with spiritual loosing and binding, and should never presume to establish commandments and prohibitions. He rules, but only through preaching, admonition and oversight exercised by means of the Word. Thus he is a bishop, or overseer, watchman, etc., and still, at the same time, a servant, and his power a ministry.[6]

[1] Erl. Ed., xliii, 281.

[2] Ibid., xxv, 364.

[3] Ibid., xxi, 123.

[4] Cf. supra, p. 88. Erl. Ed., xxvi, 105. Briefe, vi, 180, 182.

[5] Vol. I., pp. 362, 425 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 350; xl, 170.

[6] Vol. I., pp. 304 sq., 425. Vol. II., 476. Erl. Ed., xliv, 3 sqq., 13; xxxi, 127 sqq., 156 sqq.; xxi, 438; xxxviii, 434; vi, 377 sqq. Church "government" and spiritual power here become synonomous terms with Luther; even

Luther habitually represents the pastor as exercising his office *for the sake of the congregation*, upon commission from it, and in its name. Of the preacher who is offensive to his parishioners, it is said, that "the people tolerate" him. The priest, erroneously so called, is, upon Luther's theory, not only a servant of Christ, but also "a servant of all the others" from whose midst he has been chosen. The listening congregation is even said, as we have seen, itself to teach to a certain extent with him; and even when speaking of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or the "proper mass," Luther declares: We do not allow him to utter the appointed words by himself, as though for his own person, but he is mouth for all of us, and we all utter them from the heart with him, etc.[1] It is manifest from what has been previously said that the position just stated is in entire harmony with the principle, asserted with equal positiveness, that the pastor acts as a servant of Christ, under divine commission, and even in the Lord's stead. His peculiar functions are, above all else, the handling of the Word and the dispensing of the sacraments directly appointed by Christ, who Himself works in these, even when administered by unworthy men. That he, the appointed pastor, is to employ the Word and sacraments, must, in view of the call which he has received, be firmly maintained as the divine will and appointment; and this the congregation is now also in duty bound to acknowledge. Referring at once to the divine institution of the means of grace and the divine authorization of those who are to administer and dispense them, Luther says: They, the preachers, are to proffer these—for the sake and in the name of the Church—*but, much rather, by virtue of Christ's institution*.[2] Thus, the office of the ministry and its regular occupants are not to be left subject to every whim or wanton exercise of power upon the part of the congregation or rulers. The latter are not lords over pastors and their office, and, especially, dare not attempt to shield themselves from the rebukes which these are divinely authorized to administer.[3]

when he discriminates between governing power and the power of the keys (supra, Vol. I., p. 368. Erl. Ed., xxi, 287), the former is credited with only general *spiritual* functions.

[1] Erl. Ed., xxx, 369; xl, 171 sq.; xxv, 364; xvii, 250; xxxi, 350, 371.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxv, 364.

[3] Cf. also, especially, Briefe, v, 535 sqq.

Yet congregations and individual believers are, on the other hand, *not under obligation to submit* to the authority of those who bear this exalted office, if the latter attempt to force upon them doctrines or commandments of their own, instead of the Word of God alone. The public endorsement or condemnation of doctrines and spirits is, indeed—in the sense above explained—the province of the preaching-office. But yet, at the same time, the private members of the congregation may and should form their own judgment in regard to the truth, upon the basis of the Scriptures, which are themselves plain to the understanding of all.

They not only, therefore, have the right, but it is their solemn duty, to forsake false shepherds and teachers. The declarations of Christ: "Whoso despiseth you despiseth me," and "Whoso heareth you heareth me," apply only to those preachers who really teach the Word of God in accordance with the Scriptures. In fact, these very words of Christ, interpreted according to their true intent, compel us to refuse to listen to the doctrines of men. It is possible, moreover, for even the body of assembled bishops to err and forsake the truth, just as it is for any other public or private persons. Even the great mass of Christians in the world may, with their leaders, fall away.[1] Luther, accordingly, always fully justified the course of those separate congregations which, without the sanction of their former priests and with an open declaration of their independence of the latter, followed their own convictions in espousing the cause of the pure Gospel, and called new ministers upon their own authority; and he always recognized the calls thus extended as perfectly valid. Luther maintained, further, that laymen should be associated with the clergy, in a regular way and according to standing regulations, in passing judgment upon matters of faith referred to councils. In the organization of the latter there should be included a number of intelligent, true-hearted men of secular callings, for they also have an interest in the matters to be considered. To the theologian, Marbach, to the correctness of whose doctrinal view he afterwards bore testimony, he assigned, as the topic for his disputation preparatory to the reception of the doctor's degree (A. D. 1543), the question: "Whether in a synod

[1] Vol. I., pp. 505 sqq, 261 sq. Briefe, v, 535. Erl. Ed., xxviii, 336; xxv, 366. Jena, i, 552 b; Vol. I., p. 506.

(*Synode*) the bishops alone have the decisive suffrage in determining dogmas." The conclusion was: "Therefore, since it is the supreme decision of the Church, which consists of doctors and the rest of the community (*coetu*), it is necessary that judges be selected from both parties."[1] Excommunication, we have been already told, should not be administered except with the co-operation of the congregation and with its endorsement. The latter is not to be a handmaiden, but an associate judge and bosom-companion (wife).[2]

In addition to the public administration of the Word and the keys thus provided for, there remains, finally, for every member of the congregation, by virtue of his priestly office, the authority and duty of instructing, comforting, or admonishing his neighbor through the Word of God, as necessity may require. Thus fathers and mothers are to teach their children and their servants, and brothers, neighbors, fellow-citizens, etc., one another. We recall what has been said in regard to absolution received at the hand of a brother. Of this private, personal announcement of the Word, as for its public proclamation, it is said: "I hear only the voice of the pastor, or of my brother or father; but if I were to conclude, further, that the works of my father or pastor were not his, but the words of our God Himself, I would judge rightly."[3]

Luther thus assigns to the regularly-constituted office of the ministry a place by the side of the means of grace which are granted to the Church, and in the use of which her life is perpetuated. But he assigns to it such a position only as a service rendered in their administration, whereas the spirit of life is not in it, but in the means of grace themselves. And, however earnestly the constitution of the office by the congregation and the cherishing of a proper respect for it are insisted upon, it is still, according to Luther, possible for souls to be incorporated into Christ and the common body of His saints merely through the private use of the Word. Where the public preaching of the Gospel is entirely prohibited, as among the Turks and heathen and even under papal tyrants, there this *private use of the* Word

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 350 sq., 346. Seckendorf, Hist. Luth., III, § 112. Briefe, v, 543.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 177.

[3] Ibid., xl, 172 sq.; xvii, 241. Briefe, iv, 674; v, 38 sq. Erl. Ed., xlvii, 221. Supra, p. 527.

is sufficient for all essential purposes. Even in such places the Christian Church truly exists. When the regular office of the ministry has disappeared through the apostasy of its incumbents, the Church, or Christian community, has not therefore perished, but can and should constitute the office anew by summoning men from its own membership to the ministry. It is manifest from all the foregoing why Luther, despite his high estimate for the office in question, never included, nor could include, it with the Word in his ordinary utterances concerning the fundamental nature of the Church.

In the comprehensive enumeration of the signs of the Church (by which it is recognized) which we have been following, we find mentioned, as the sixth and seventh, *prayer* and the *holy cross*, which must be laid particularly upon the true Church in consequence of the hatred of the world, and whose divine purpose is to lead the latter to cling firmly to Christ and the Word of God.[1]

Thus we have "seven redemptive agencies" (*Heilthümer:* sanctities), or "the proper seven principal parts of the exalted redemptive agency" (*Heilthum*) by which the Holy Spirit accomplishes the daily sanctification and vivification of believers. Luther would even like to call them the seven sacraments,[2] if that word had not been so misused by the Papists, besides being otherwise employed in the Scriptures.

The sanctification which God thus effects in His people must now also bear fruit in their lives, by means of which the character of His saints becomes manifest. Hence all the *fruits displayed in the moral life of* believers are further external signs by which the Church may be known.[3] But, adds Luther, they are not as reliable as those previously mentioned; for such works are often performed likewise, and that with an appearance of greater sanctity than among Christians, by the heathen, although they are then not done sincerely from the heart and for God's sake, but with some other object in view. And, not only in their significance as signs, but also in their relation to the perpetuity and character of the Church itself, Luther always expressly subordinates them to the pure preaching of the Word, or to *pure doctrine*, which alone can produce an amendment of the life, and whose

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 374 sqq. [2] Vol. I., p. 403 sq.
[3] Erl. Ed., xxv, 376 sqq.; vi, 67; l, 40.

corruption contaminates the whole multitude, whereas the corrupt life of the individual injures commonly only himself.[1] The necessity for such a constant insistence upon the diligent use of the objective, beatifying and sanctifying Word arises inevitably from Luther's entire conception of salvation and the Christian life. At the same time, there remains, it is true, some ground for the question upon our part, whether this general position of Luther really of necessity involves such an exaltation of the doctrine expressed in fixed formulæ as we find in his writings, and whether —as Luther recognizes a reacting influence exerted by the moral deportment of the individual upon his inner spiritual apprehensions—he might and should not have recognized, also, a retroactive influence of the moral condition of the congregation upon its inner apprehension of the truth and upon the effective proclamation of the living Word within its bounds.[2]

Besides these saving instrumentalities, which are cherished in the Church as divine institutions, and which are regarded as effectual through the accompanying power of the Spirit, there are, still further, various *external customs*, or modes of administration, which have no sanctifying power, and have not been commanded or instituted by God, but which "are outwardly necessary or useful, are proper and becoming, and which produce an orderly discipline and church economy" (1 Cor. xiv. 40). They are the orderly and appropriate forms in which the dispensing and administration of the means of grace in the congregation, prayer, etc., are to be clothed. They embrace chiefly such matters as the *appointed order of divine worship*, the celebration of particular days and hours, the use of altars, priestly vestments, etc., and further, for example, the observance of fasting, as a religious ceremony, by the congregation at large. We have here no longer to do with matters appointed by God, but with human arrangement, precept or tradition. In regard to all things of this kind, Luther's unvarying testimony is, that they are not to be again exalted to the position of essential matters, nor regarded as binding upon the conscience. He expresses himself with great discrimination as follows: To the work which God ordains

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 375; xvii, 35. (Thus already in A. D. 1523; cf. also Löscher, i, 225, 231. Supra, Vol. I., p. 205 sq., before A. D. 1517); xliv, 95; xvi, 100 sq.; xxxiv, 241, 351.

[2] Cf., upon this doctrine, also our remarks, supra, p. 429.

—preaching, prayer, the discipline of the flesh—tradition dare not append a new compulsory work. Its province, on the contrary, is merely to lay hold of the work divinely prescribed, and to presuppose, as it were, the appointment of the essential thing in question, which it then solemnizes, as they say, and invests with quantity, quality, the where, the when, and the special end in any case. For example, the giving of thanks is a work * * * of divine precept, but becomes also a work of tradition when the latter dictates: We wish it to be performed at such an hour, in such a place, in such a posture. But these appointments of accidental matters in his works God wishes to be *free* and *truly* "*accidentia*." [1] We recall our earlier notice of the toleration of "tradition" in this sense.[2] He habitually represents even the observance of Sunday in this light.[3]

Nor is it the province of the pastor or bishop to *appoint such customs and methods*, but that of *the Church*, *i. e.*, the whole body of baptized and believing persons belonging to the pastor or bishop. The pastor may exhort the Church to approve fasts, prayers, festivals, etc., but he dare impose no ceremonies—"unless by the consent of the Church, either expressed or tacit." [4] Individual believers should submit to wholesome ordinances. "Yet if any one be sometimes unable, on account of distress, sickness, hindrances of various kinds, to observe such ordinances, it must not be accounted a sin." Such ordinances may be also omitted without sin, unless, indeed, the omission should give offence to the weak.[5] The conception of the "spiritual power," or that of the keys themselves, Luther never applied to the arrangement of such forms.

Just in view, however, of the liberty which we enjoy in regard

[1] Erl. Ed., xxv, 383 sqq., 393 sqq. Briefe, iv, 122, 125. [2] Vol. I., p. 502.

[3] Vol. I., pp. 207, 358; II., p. 38 sqq. Erl. Ed., xxi, 48 sqq.; xxiii, 52; xxv, 275; xvii, 247 sqq. Although Luther declares in a passage already cited (supra, p. 343) that the Seventh day was hallowed in Paradise, he still says (Erl. Ed., xxxi, 443, A. D. 1538), that "Moses now names the seventh day (in the Third Commandment), and the injunction to do no work on that day because God created the world in six days is the temporary dress in which Moses clothes this commandment for his people particularly for that time; for previously we find nothing of this kind recorded either of Abraham or of the times of the patriarchs." Cf. further, supra, p. 39 sq.

[4] Erl. Ed., xxxi, 123 sq. Briefe, iv, 106.

[5] Erl. Ed., xxv, 340 sq. Comm. ad Gal., ii, 167.

to ceremonies, Luther would have those who are inwardly free and strong display the greatest possible *consideration for the weak* and simple-minded in the transformation of ancient customs. No offence should be given them in their weakness, and the new measure should be made specially helpful in furnishing to such the stimulus, instruction and discipline which they may particularly need.[1] But, beyond this, not only should no further attention be paid to the opposition of members of the congregation hopelessly attached to papal customs, but the *wanton insubordination* of reckless characters, who never will agree to anything of a general nature or for the common interest, should be restrained, in order that the new measure may find general acceptance. In the same connection, Luther warns also against too many and needless differences in the customs of the various individual churches.[2] But he always lays by far the greatest stress upon his testimony *against every ancient or modern attempt at compulsion*, against all legality in matters of this kind, and all passion for conformity. He will never hear of the compromise, suggested in the interest of church unity, whose advocates sought to interpret the customs of the Romish Church in as unobjectionable way as possible, and appealed to the duty of Christian love. He says: "It will not do (*nihil est*) to boast of love in order to attack liberty. If the devil crowds in a finger, he will overturn everything." Even when presenting the liturgy which he himself prepared especially for Wittenberg, he expressly disowned all intention of urging it upon other churches. He advises against the holding of an evangelical council for the establishment of common forms for the Churches of the Reformation, because he foresees the danger of awakening a new zeal for human ordinances, and because he regarded the true unity of the Church as already sufficiently guarded in the faith of the divine Word. He declares: "Necessity itself requires that ceremonies be diverse." If there but remain unity of doctrine, harmony may easily be attained in the midst of such diversity, just as in music different voices beautifully blend. He would, further, allow the new liturgies, before being published in the form of statutes, to be first developed in actual practice, and as though spontaneously,

[1] Vol. I., pp. 418, 464. Vol. II., p. 34.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxiii, 9. Briefe, iii, 353; iv, 282.

in the separate localities. They should then be published, not as strict requirements, but as matters of historical record. Their liability to change should always be acknowledged, and further future revisions be constantly kept in view.[1] The whole matter of ceremonial agitation is so distasteful to him, that, when asked by the prince of Anhalt for advice in regard to ecclesiastical customs, he bluntly declares (A. D. 1545): "I am impatient of even necessary ceremonies, but hostile to those which are not necessary; for it is easy for ceremonies to grow into laws, and, once established as laws, they soon become snares for the conscience."[2] The motives, finally, by which Luther was controlled, in changing or leaving unchanged the traditional forms of the Church, were still of the same nature as those which had guided him in his earlier years. The natural conservatism which was thus manifested was reinforced after the Carlstadt controversy by his abhorrence of the new legal, and at the same time disorderly, spirit then evoked, which made necessary requirements again out of optional matters, and, still further, by his dread of the opening of needless questions among the rude populace, which might easily become the means of leading them to despise the Word itself. Yet we have already seen[3] how he proceeded at a later date, *e. g.*, in abolishing the elevation of the host, when there seemed to be no further occasion for such precautionary delay. He always kept in view, moreover, as the class to whom chiefly forms are to be adapted, not eminent Christians, but the young of the Church. He says in the *German Mass*, which appeared in 1526, that if we had an assemblage of only such as earnestly desired to be Christians, we would there have *no need of "much and great singing,"* and would require only a short and suitable form in administering baptism and the Lord's Supper. The liturgy which he now himself offers is designed, he says, for plain people, some of whom are not yet Christians, but of whom the greater number only stand and gape after something new, and who must have in divine service, first of all, some public incitement toward Christian living. He later says, in the same spirit,

[1] Briefe, iii, 197; v, 260 sqq. Erl. Ed., xxii, 227. Briefe, ii, 563; iv, 600; v, 539. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 9. Briefe, vi, 81; iv, 528, 106. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 124.

[2] Briefe, vi, 379.

[3] Supra, p. 184.

that Christians of the right kind need no pulpit, altar, etc., but that we should follow the established order, with certain places, hours, etc., for the sake of the children and the plain multitude.[1] "Some ceremonies are useful to the multitude in arousing their dull souls."[2] In regard to the relation of the present form of divine worship to that of the apostles, we have already[3] heard him declare, that the mode pursued by the latter would not be possible with the present arrangement of congregations and pastors, and was not made obligatory by the apostles themselves.

Under this same point of view—as in itself optional, yet useful, salutary, and demanded by a due regard for order and discipline—we must, with Luther, include also the particular *concrete form of the one preaching, or pastoral, office*. All who hold this office have in equal measure the commission and ministerial calling to rule through the Word; and the Scriptures understand by *bishops* nothing more than presbyters. But, just as they differ from one another in natural endowments, so may and should also some be placed over others by human appointment for the better discharge of the duties of the office. Thus Luther, in his letter to the Bohemians, already suggested the introduction of *superintendents* and *visitors*, and even the establishment of an archiepiscopate; and he thus, also, assisted in the establishment of the plan of church visitations in Saxony. He then applies the terms, "bishops," or "overseers," or—according to Rom. xii. 8—"rulers" (*Regierer*), in a narrower sense to those only who "are to watch over all offices, that they are properly administered."[4] On the other hand, he gave no sanction to the idea of a new primacy over the entire Church, which should not, like that of the Papacy, claim "divine right," but which should be introduced upon mere human authority, simply for the better preservation of unity. He sees that it would be impossible for the Pope to accede to such a plan, and he foresees that it would, in any event, soon be treated with contempt, would retain the allegiance of none, and would lead to widespread disorders. But the Pope, as he now is, he always with great earnestness represents as Anti-

[1] In A. D. 1539.

[2] Briefe, iii, 294. Erl. Ed., xxii, 229 sqq.; xxv, 384. Briefe, iv, 210, 282.

[3] Supra, p. 95.

[4] Vol. I., pp. 302, 426 sq., 368. Vol. II., p. 88. Erl. Ed., vi, 377 sqq.; xxiii, 4 sqq.; viii, 26.

christ, who, as the man of sin, sets himself up in his presumption against all that is called God.[1]

In possession thus of the divine means of grace, in the employment of them, embracing also the various human forms in which they are administered, in faith upon Christ and sanctification through His Spirit, the genuine Christian world is the community, or Church, of Christ—the people of God. In it Christ has His spiritual kingdom and dominion.[2] For the sake of His Church, and from within it, He allows His blessings to flow out upon the whole world.[3]

This Church is *the Holy Church*—hallowed through its Head and His Word and sacraments—in Christ, even perfectly righteous, holy and without spot—hallowed, also, through the daily purifying power of the Spirit working in its members, although in them ever stained by much sin and hence constantly imploring forgiveness. Nor is it made unholy by the many false Christians yet within it. Open sinners it makes holy, or by excommunication casts them out from participation in the saving ordinances. Yet the unholy in its communion are always only like boils and ulcers upon a sound body. The little company of God's children is a vigorous, healthy body, although mingled with it may be found filth and stench which must be cast out.[4]

All believers and saints are, moreover, despite all outward divisions and difference in their human customs, bound together under the One Head, through the One Spirit, the Word, baptism, etc., in one faith, heart and mind—with manifold gifts, but yet harmonious in Christian love. It is One Church.[5]

Thus the Church, in its character as *universal*, embraces the believing of *all places*, even under the Pope, among the Turks, etc.[6] It extends none the less, as the *One Catholic Church, through all ages*. Even under the Papacy this true community of Christ continued to exist, and the present evangelical Church

[1] Vol. I., pp. 293 sqq., 309, 426 sq. Erl. Ed., xxv, 123 sq.; xli, 295 sqq.

[2] Supra, p. 423. [3] Supra, p. 324. Briefe, v, 443.

[4] Vol. I., p. 306. Comm. ad Gal., iii, 38 sqq. Op. Ex., xviii, 176, 215. Erl. Ed., xxv, 354; supra, p. 457. Erl. Ed., xxv, 363; xvi, 246 sqq., 259 sq.; ii, 53, 58; xlix, 268.

[5] Vol. I., pp. 303 sq., 364. Erl. Ed., xxi, 103. Cf. what has been said above in regard to ceremonies.

[6] Vol. I., p. 308. Erl. Ed., xxx, 369; ix, 263.

is one with it. Despite all the corruptions of the Romish Church, there were still preserved in it by God not only the Word, baptism, the Lord's Supper, absolution, prayer, the office of the ministry, etc., but ever also, together with these, a number of believers and saints, although, indeed, "everything went feebly" there.[1] Still further, the Church of God was already in existence throughout Old Testament times, under the old carnal forms appointed for Israel, and, particularly, with an outward priesthood and natural succession, in the posterity of Abraham and the family of Aaron.[2] It originated with Adam in Paradise.[3]

This Church, ruled by the Holy Spirit, was and is also ever the "*pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. iii. 15). It cannot err, because it abides by the word of Scripture, which is essentially clear. God has also always preserved to Himself some believing souls, whom He has, at least before their death, made sound in their faith. It is not possible that the *whole* Church, *i. e.*, all Christians, should have fallen into error in leading articles of faith, as, *e. g.*, that of baptism, or of the presence of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. *That* Church, it is true, which is generally thought of under the term, *i. e.*, the visible Church, may and does err. The true Church, or community of Christ, cannot be brought together at one place, and it is often found in places where we would be least likely to expect it. And even it, or, in other words, the genuine believers or saints who compose it, falls at least temporarily into errors, by allowing itself to be drawn from the Word, and hence it always needs the article upon forgiveness. But it is one thing to err, and another thing to remain in error: the Church of Christ cannot remain in error. In considering the liability of the Church and saints to error, we must therefore always regard them in a two-fold light: first, according to the Spirit, and secondly, according to the flesh—and consider whether even their worship and employment of the Word do not smack of the flesh.[4]

[1] Vol. I., p. 421 sq. Erl. Ed., l, 7 sqq., 13 sq. Op. Ex., iii, 56. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 320, 339 sqq.; xxvi, 10 sqq.

[2] Supra, pp. 361, 363. Op. Ex., iii, 55 sqq.

[3] Supra, pp. 343 sq., 361, 363.

[4] Vol. I., pp. 317, 319, 408 sq., 422, 505. Vol. II., pp. 53 sq., 160 sq., 163. Jena, iii, 181 b. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 332; xxvi, 35 sqq., l, 9 (vid. supra, p. 270 sqq); xlvi, 229 sqq.; l, 304; xlvi, 234; xl, 235; xi, 10; xxv, 59 sqq.; xxxi, 332; xlvi, 247.

Although Luther, in defending infant baptism and the bodily presence in the Lord's Supper, so eagerly appeals to the universality of the custom and doctrine advocated in the Church, which cannot, in its totality and perpetually, err, it is yet here again manifest, on the other hand, how impossible it would be, in his view, for any external decision of the Church to give certainty in regard to the true doctrine, since there must always remain room to inquire, whether the true saints are represented in the assembly in question, and, further still, whether the flesh may not, in the particular instance at hand, have temporarily beclouded the vision of even the true believers present.

With such a conception of the nature of the Church, it remains for Luther always an *object of faith*, and not of sight—to be recognized, indeed, by the signs above enumerated in so far that we may know the circuit within which the saints are to be found, and may, to a certain extent, form conclusions in regard to individual members from the fruits borne in their lives—but not so clearly as to discriminate with certainty between such individual saints, or the true people of God, and the unholy, nor to see the holiness of the former. The difficulty of such discernment is increased by the outward insignificance of the true Church, the overwhelming preponderance of the false church in comparison, and the subjection to shame and tribulation, beneath which the former lies hidden like the treasure in the field, although it, in reality, has its hidden life with Christ in God.[1]

This is, it will be observed, still Luther's original view of the Church as the little company of holy believers, actually existing, living in the world, and yet, in its real nature, invisible. We have here again heard him declaring, that impenitent sinners and enemies of the Gospel, even though not formally excluded from the fellowship of the sacraments, no longer belong to the Church in the true sense of the word. Nevertheless, he still without hesitancy applies the name "Church" also, in the traditional way, to the collective body of those who stand in the outward fellowship of the means of grace, the confession and the ecclesiastical ordinances—to the whole field, upon which the tares are growing

[1] Vol. I., pp. 365 sq. (cf. with this also Thomasius, Christi Person und Werk, III, ii, 391, Note against Münchmeyer), 426 sq. Erl. Ed., xxv, 376. Comm. ad Gal., iii, 38. Briefe, iv, 316. Erl. Ed., xviii, 139; xxxv, 338. Op. Ex., xviii, 177; xxiii, 23 sq.; viii, 193 sqq. Jena, iv, 342 b.

with the wheat—to the body, including the boils found upon it. Even Paul, he says, thus still addresses the degenerate Galatians as congregations. In one of his latest books, he even says that the Scriptures apply the name "Church," *in the first place*, to all those who confess one doctrine and participate in the same sacraments, despite the commingling of many hypocrites and ungodly; and, then also, to that pure portion, or the elect, who embrace the Word with true faith and receive the Holy Spirit.

He grants that we may thus yet speak even of a "holy Romish Church." Yet in such a use of the word he sees only the figure of speech, synecdoche. Peculiarly and properly, as he now again asserts, the name, "Holy Church," belongs only to the pure portion of the visible communion.[1]

The doctrine of Luther concerning the Church has now been viewed in all its fundamental elements, and has been seen to constitute a complete whole, itself truly harmonious in form, and standing, likewise, in profound and clear mutual relations with his entire view of saving truth in general. There yet remains for us the task of considering more carefully this "community of saints" in all its relations to that ordinance, or power, to which the secular life has been as such subjected, and which must now also be, and is, administered by Christians, namely, the "*secular power*," or "*civil government*." We must then, further, observe how these *general principles* of Luther in regard to the nature and life of the Church, and especially in regard to the preaching-office and the relation of the congregation to the latter, were applied, in accordance with his own suggestions, to the actual circumstances of the age, and thus attained a concrete development. These two lines of investigation can be best pursued together; for it was only after Luther had been called upon as a Reformer to deal with these practical and already existing conditions that we find clearly and constantly brought into prominence those views of the relation of the civil government to the Church which ever remained characteristic of his teaching. The theory thus developed as to the province of the civil government exercised also the greatest influence upon the form assumed by the Church,

[1] Erl. Ed., xvi, 247; ii, 53; supra, p. 80. Op. Ex., xx, 7 sq. Comm. ad Gal. i, 40 sq. Jena, iv, 817.

or community of believers, wherever his doctrines penetrated. It is worthy of very particular attention, also, that we find the views referred to far less fully expressed in his own formal doctrinal writings than in letters and expressions of opinion drawn from him in the course of outward events. In this sphere also, we shall find in Luther fixed general principles and doctrines. But, at the same time, we cannot fail to observe frequent wavering and danger of falling into contradictions. The cause of this is to be sought, not only in the difficulties which the existing state of affairs usually interposes to the actual realization of the clearest and most practical ideas; but we must acknowledge that he did not so profoundly investigate the questions which arose in regard to the relation of the civil government to ecclesiastical matters as he had done in the case of those relating to the doctrine of salvation and the inner nature of the Church, but, on the contrary, remained here more largely under the influence of traditional general premises.

To what extent, it was inquired, and in what way, could the Church, despite all the carnal infirmities and impure members which still inevitably cling to it, nevertheless be actually exemplified in the world as the holy congregation of Christ? Luther constantly reiterated the demand that open sinners be cast out. Must it not, in the end, result in the establishment of a community such as that of which he speaks in his *German Mass*, which should consist only of such members as earnestly desire to be Christians, exercise discipline properly against unchristian members according to Matt. xviii., and need for themselves few external forms?[1] Still further, in what form should the participation of the congregation, as such, be concretely realized in the exercise of discipline; in the calling of ministers, who must, it has been claimed, receive from it their commission; in the confirmation of ecclesiastical laws, which, it was taught, must have its approval; and even in passing judgment upon teachers already ordained and their teaching, inasmuch as it is charged, above all things else, to be on its guard against shepherds who prove unfaithful to the Gospel? And how, finally, should all this be accomplished if the congregation is still to retain among its members so many who have as yet no personal experience of

[1] Erl. Ed., xxii, 230 sq.

true Christian life, or who are strongly disposed to disorderly conduct?

It will be necessary for us to follow the course of historical events and circumstances in order to discover Luther's attitude upon these questions; and we shall find that it was his conception of the province of the civil authorities which here exercised the controlling influence.

We have already seen that it was among the original fundamental principles of Luther, that the secular sphere belongs to the domain of the civil authorities, but not the spiritual sphere in which the Church lives and moves. The civil government has to do with the latter only in so far as this also requires for its continuation in the world the preservation of peace in the land.[1]

But, since the existing, secularized ecclesiastical authorities of the Papal Church now refused to render any relief to the Church in its distressed condition, Luther called upon those who wielded the secular authority to *render assistance*, as fellow-citizens and fellow-priests, just because they, by reason of this their civil authority, were in position to do so most effectively.[2] We have here, primarily, nothing more than the idea of assistance to be tendered in an emergency, as against the encroachments of the unchristian power of the corrupt Church authorities, and, at the same time, as against the disorderly intrusion of individuals uncalled. The aim was merely to *open the way* for a proper representation of the Church in a council, which might, when once assembled, adopt such measures as required by the circumstances. Nor was it proposed at all that the authority of such a council should then make the acceptance of the new evangelical ordinances a matter of commandment or compulsion. Luther thus, in his tract, published early in the year 1523, *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit*, etc., still says, in opposing the prohibition of evangelical books by the government, that not only has the civil government no authority to exercise any compulsion in matters of faith, but that it lies, not within its province, but in that of the bishops, to guard against false, deceptive doctrine and heresy.[3] Since, then, there could evidently be no thought of a reformation through a free evangelical council, Luther's next idea was that,

[1] Supra, p. 482 sq.

[2] Vol. I., p. 375.

[3] Erl. Ed., xxii, 90.

in the various countries and cities, the civil authorities should *allow*, under their protection, the *free preaching of the Word*, which would then conquer by its own inherent power, and should assist and confirm the new measures introduced by any Christian community under their jurisdiction which may have been aroused to spiritual activity by the Word thus preached. In this spirit he wrote, for example, to the council of Prague, A. D. 1523, advising that the decision of the question, whether the new form (of worship) should be introduced throughout all Bohemia, be referred to the existing estates of the land, but that no compulsion be employed in any separate districts.[1]

Yet, as early as A. D. 1522, he had already gone farther in his utterances in relation to the ecclesiastical affairs of Saxony (and also Schwartzburg), in which he was, of course, most directly interested. He now not only maintained that the civil ruler may *secure the pure preaching* of the Word, but that he may guard his people against the false and stubborn papal preachers, and, instead of the latter, who have forfeited their official character by opposing the Gospel, may help to appoint, or himself appoint, new pastors. In contrast with the quotation in the preceding paragraph from the tract, *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit*, we must cite also from the *Treue Vermahnung—vor Aufruhr*, etc., published in 1522, the declaration, that we should not, indeed, kill the miserable priests, as did Elijah, but we should prohibit by word of mouth and *restrain by force* their machinations against the Gospel. Princes and rulers must in this way do their part, in order to avert the wrath of God. In A. D. 1525, we reach at length the completely developed view of the matter, which, from that time on, remained the controlling principle for the theologians and princes of the Reformation, namely: that open blasphemies against the divine name, such as, for example, that perpetrated in the abomination of the mass, are to be accounted a public disgrace, which the civil authorities should take proper means to prevent. It is the province of the latter to *prohibit "externas abominationes."* Luther makes the further broad assertion, that it is *the duty of the civil government, as such, to honor the Word of God, to demand that it be taught*, etc.[2] This was essentially

[1] Supra, p. 88. Jena, ii, 586 b.

[2] Briefe, ii, 192 sq., 258. Erl. Ed., xxii, 49. Briefe, iii, 50, 89; iv, 93 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxix, 244, 250.

the same view as that which the opposing party also maintained, and which held sway in the entire traditional theory, legislation and practice.[1] The only distinction lay in the fact, that Luther released the princes from the dependence upon the judgment of the Papal Church as to what is really the teaching of the Word of God, and summoned them to act according to their own independent convictions as to the contents of the Scriptures. They received also, through the edicts of the Diet of Spires in 1526, lawful authority to act for the time being in external matters of this kind upon their own territories.

As to the false evangelical errorists, the Anabaptists and Fanatics, Luther was at first very anxious, in the interest of the Word itself, that the latter should be allowed to assert its power and thus itself vanquish its opponents, and that the disorderly spirits should be permitted to fight among themselves without interference. So late as February, 1525, he endeavored to regard certain Fanatics who appeared in Nuremburg "as not yet blasphemers," but only misguided Christians.[2] But his judgment in the premises was quite different, so soon as, in his opinion, the free Word had borne sufficiently clear testimony against their folly. Even the apologetic utterance last cited suggests the category of blasphemers as that under which the Fanatics were naturally included.

He now further justifies active measures against the Fanatics, on the one hand, and the Papists, upon the other, upon the ground that it is the *duty of the civil government to preserve harmony in the land and to prevent all schisms and quarrels*. Otherwise, says he, we should have to expect insurrection at length in consequence of the teachings of these "perverse" preachers. The government dare never tolerate any schismatic doctrine. He combines both points of view in the declaration, that the government must with its sword guard against the offence of false doctrine and improper divine worship; otherwise all authority would be undermined and all manner of calamities would ensue.[3]

We must, finally, not overlook the assertion of Luther, that "all things which we adorn with ceremonies, as vestments, postures,

[1] Cf. also Briefe, iv, 93 sq. [2] Briefe, ii, 135, 547, 622.
[3] Briefe, iii, 89, 489. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 9; ii, 59 sq.

fasts, festivals," are secular, earthly matters, under the supervision of reason, and hence reason here may act and control.[1] He says this, it is true, only in attempting to prove that the fasts and festivals demanded by the Papists might be regarded as merely a sort of secular ordinances established by the civil authorities,[2] and not with any thought of furnishing the evangelical princes an argument to justify the adoption on their part of measures affecting the cultus of the Church. But, in the actual measures adopted under the official sanction of the civil authorities of the day, the two points of view were not kept clearly distinct in the minds of the people.

The evangelical civil rulers, accordingly, now *abolished masses, appointed new preachers*, threatening the recalcitrant with expatriation, and before long began to prepare comprehensive *new liturgical forms* for the conduct of divine worship and the regulation of the pastoral office, introducing the latter under civil protection and instruction. That such a course was in itself not justified either by the peculiar calling of the civil government or by the nature of the Church, Luther, indeed, expressly declares in his preface to the Saxon *Visitationsunterricht* of 1528. Since, he there says, there was a pressing necessity for the re-establishment of the proper episcopal and visitatorial office, and yet no one of us had a calling, or clear commission, for its exercise * * * "we have endeavored to keep upon sure ground,[3] and, confining ourselves to the office of love (which is common and commanded to all Christians), have humbly implored His Electoral Grace, out of love (for it could not be required on the basis of his worldly authority) and for God's sake, * * * to call and ordain persons for this office." He declares, in a similar way, in connection with the installation of an evangelical bishop at Naumburg, that the chapter at that place should itself properly have undertaken the election of the one to fill this office; but that, since the incumbents of the office refuse to discharge their duty, the secular officers must be emergency-bishops, and protect the true preachers and assist them to preach. He appeals also to Isa. xlix. 23 (kings shall be thy nursing-fathers), which the church-orders often apply directly to the participation of the

[1] Briefe, iv, 143. [2] Cf. supra, p. 473.

[3] "Des Gewissen wollen spielen"; cf. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 59, 325.

secular princes in the affairs of the Church. Only thus, indeed, could his principle, that the government should tolerate only the One Church of the pure Word, be perfectly carried out; but care must be exercised that the inward regulation of the Church be left in the hands of purely ecclesiastical agencies. It is to be regarded, furthermore, as the actual duty of Christian rulers, according to other utterances of Luther, to render this service of love in such cases of necessity. The *Preface* above referred to declares further, that, although the prince is not commanded to teach and to exercise spiritual sway, he must yet, as a secular ruler, see to it that strife and faction do not break out in his realm.[1]

Luther then describes as *teaching not to be tolerated*, and as blasphemy, every denial of any article clearly based upon the Scriptures and believed by the whole Christian Church. In this category he includes, for example, the Romish doctrine of satisfaction for sin rendered by man himself, and the Zwinglian doctrine upon the Lord's Supper. In disputes between Papists and evangelical Christians, the government shall investigate, and impose silence upon the party whose principles do not agree with the Scriptures. Effective measures should be taken against corner-preachers because, in the first place, they come uncalled and create discord; and, further, because of their disposition to encourage Anabaptistic insurrection against the established secular order. All such persons should be commanded to keep silence, and, if they do not obey, driven out of the land. Slanderers of the Lutheran doctrine and of the office of the ministry are threatened with imprisonment.[2] Yet Luther always expresses himself most decidedly against the infliction of the death-penalty upon false teachers; fearing that there might otherwise be among the adherents of the Gospel a repetition of the papal abuse of power. It was another matter entirely when he sanctioned the use of the sword, although "a cruel thing to see," against Anabaptists, since they undertake even to destroy the "kingdoms of the world."[3]

But, with all these concessions to the civil authority, he repeatedly declares, that *no one dare, nor can, be driven to faith itself.*

[1] Erl. Ed., xxiii, 5 sq.; xxvi, 103; xxiii, 9; cf. Richter, Kirchenordnungen, i, 77.

[2] Erl. Ed., xxxix, 250 sqq; xxxi, 217; xliii, 313. Briefe, iii, 263; iv, 407, 355; v, 1, 507.

[3] Briefe, iii, 347 sq. Erl. Ed., xxvi, 256; xvi, 259 sqq. Briefe, vi, 291.

Every one may in private blaspheme, conduct divine worship, or read books, as much as he pleases.[1] Yet, on the other hand, he goes so far as to say that, without attempting to drive slanderers of true doctrine to faith, we should compel them to attend preaching for the sake of the Ten Commandments, in order that they may at least learn the outward works of obedience—and, with reference to the ignorant (what might, however, be only too readily applied also to errorists), that we should require pastors and the children of the Church, under penalty, to make proper use of the Catechism, in order that those who want to be called Christians may at least be compelled to learn what a Christian ought to know, whether or not they will then believe it.[2]

In view of the above principles, it is easy to explain the *actual character of the congregations* which were formed as evangelical organizations under such activity and instructions on the part of the civil authorities, and under the preaching thus provided. We have already presented the idea advanced by Luther in 1526 in regard to a congregation composed entirely of genuine Christians. He adds, when suggesting this, that he cannot, however, and would not, attempt as yet to organize such a congregation, since he had not the people needed for the purpose; but that, if the time should ever come when he could no longer with a good conscience refuse to make such an attempt, he will do the best that he can to accomplish it. He had expressed the same thought in the part of the *Church Postils* which appeared in 1525, together with the remark, that he would gladly have done so long ago, but the matter had not yet been sufficiently preached and urged. Against the Homberg plan of reformation, of the year 1525, which sought to carry out this idea, he raised no objection on the ground of its essential character, but merely held that such an order should and could not be at once introduced as a law.[3] In March of the following year, he is still in hopes that by means of the Church Visitation there may be established, instead of the "theatrical assemblage" (*concio theatralis*), of Christians and non-christians together, a "gathering of Chris-

[1] Erl. Ed., xxxix, 250 sq., 253. Briefe, iii, 90, 498; iv, 94 (Prohibition of the printing of books.) Briefe, iii, 528 sq. Seidem, Lutherbriefe, 39.

[2] Briefe, iii, 498; cf. i, 327; iv, 308.

[3] Cf. supra, p. 554 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxii, 231; xi, 185 sqq. Briefe, vi, 80 sq.

tians" in which it will be possible to exercise discipline according to Matt. xviii.[1] Long afterwards he still declares most positively, at least in regard to the openly sinful, however little the actual practice may have corresponded with the principle, that the Church does not tolerate such in its midst, but casts them out.[2] He at a still later day spoke appreciatively of the discipline exercised in the Swiss churches, and particularly of that among the Bohemian Brethren.[3] But the great bulk of the congregations of the Lutheran reformation continued to embrace, in largely preponderating numbers, the "simple-minded people," and even the "coarse crowd"; for these, therefore, the public worship must still be essentially "a public incitement to Christian life" (*Reizung zum Christenthum*), and Luther was compelled to bitterly lament that even the most necessary exercise of discipline was unattainable. All the more, however, did he rejoice that the Word was here at least so widely proclaimed and carried its message to so many, and that the Church was, nevertheless, in possession of the means of grace and, with the multitude of true believers within its bounds, remained a holy congregation and dwelling place of God.

In accord also with the general principles which we have traced, we find developed the theory of the independent participation of individual congregations in the administration of the Church. The pastors, who are to exercise the public ministry of the Word of Christ "on account of the congregation," Luther frequently describes simply as "called by the civil authorities" (*Obrigkeit*).[4] He declares, for example, in A. D. 1536, with reference to the above-mentioned establishment of the pastoral office at Erfurt, that the calling of pastors is not properly the business of the civil ruler or magistrate, but that of the congregation (*ecclesia*), and that the magistrate therefore extends the call, not as a magistrate, but as a member of the Church. He then recognizes the Erfurt preachers, since they have been called, "not only by the people and the congregation, but by the chief magistrate," thus still speaking also of the call as extended by the congregation itself; and he relies, still further, upon the recognition accorded them

[1] Briefe, iii, 166 sq.; cf. 154. [2] Erl. Ed., xxv, 363.
[3] Briefe, v, 86. Comenii, Historia fratrum, Halæ, 1702, pp. 23, 25.
[4] Erl. Ed., vi, 9. Comm. ad Gal., i, 31 sq.

by the preachers of the other congregations. In his *Exempel einen rechten Bischof zu weihen* (Model for the ordination of a true bishop), published in 1542, he demands, likewise, as we have heard, that the Church and the bishop be one, and that the Church (evidently the congregation) be willing to give heed to the bishop.[1] But, although he elsewhere also urges the formal recognition of the candidate by his brethren already in the ministry, in actual practice the reception of the preacher by the congregation,[2] in connection with its civil rulers, always appears to have consisted in mere passive and silent consent.

Ecclesiastical laws, moreover, are framed by the civil rulers, under the advice of the theologians, without any effort to secure the consent of the remaining members of the congregation. Of the laity, none take active part in this work except the princes and their secular counselors.

For the *infliction of excommunication* Luther habitually, with great earnestness, demanded the *co-operation of the congregation*. After having, in the absence of any formal provision for this, first of all exhorted pastors to at least exclude the stubbornly wicked from the communion,[3] he finally (A. D. 1539) expresses his desire for the introduction of the following order: "I send," says he, "to the sinner, after I have admonished him, two persons, such as chaplains, or others. Afterwards, I add to these two of the council and overseers (*Kastenherrn*) and two honorable men of the congregation. Finally, if he remains obstinate, I announce it publicly to the Church—with the request: 'Help to counsel, kneel down, help to pray against him and give him over to the devil,'" etc.[4] We observe that he here again includes also the civil officers, although he protested vigorously[5] against wanton interference upon their part. In 1540, he sends to Nuremberg by Melanchthon, Jonas and Bugenhagen, a statement of his views in regard to excommunication, in which he sanctions its administration "in any congregation, the elders having been called into consultation."[6] The so-called Wittenberg Reformation of 1545, which met with his approval, recommends, further,

[1] Briefe, vi, 179 sq. Erl. Ed., xxvi, 105.

[2] Cf. especially Briefe, v, 8. Erl. Ed., xxiii, 64.

[3] Briefe, iv, 497. Cf. Luther's own course, Tischr., ii, 350 sq. Briefe, vi, 213 sq.

[4] Tischr., iii, 352 sqq. [5] Briefe, iii, 538. [6] Ibid., v, 266.

that "honorable and learned men—as honorable members of the congregation among the laity—from the other ranks of the people" be invited to participate. Still further, he speaks in high terms, in 1543, of the Hessian form of excommunication, which was based upon a formal elders' institute, and wishes that it were possible to introduce it also at other places.[1] But he was never able to put into actual practice his suggestion of A. D. 1539, nor anything of a similar nature. In Electoral Saxony, although proposals of excommunication were to come from the pastors themselves, the decision in regard to them was placed in the hands of consistories. Luther bewails, in general, the fact that there is no zeal whatever among church members themselves for the exercise of discipline in the spirit of Christ's instructions; that no one was willing to make a beginning in admonishing his neighbor on account of his vices and transgressions and then bringing the matter before the Church.[2]

With all the functions and duties which Luther thus granted and commended to the civil authorities in ecclesiastical affairs, he yet always *insisted upon his fundamental principle* as to the strict distinction which must be preserved between the secular and the spiritual authorities, if both were not to be involved in confusion and disorder.[3] To those who saw in the steps taken with his approval by the evangelical princes an assumption of spiritual authority, he replied, that the princes only assent to the preaching and do not themselves preach, and that the abuses which they seek to correct are external matters, etc.;[4] and it is certainly true that he would never consent to the exercise of directly spiritual functions, or direct compulsion in spiritual matters, upon their part. With the activity of the princes, however, very grave perils at once began to menace the very churches whose patrons they had been invited to become. Luther declares: "It does not belong to princes to confirm even the true doctrine, but to be subject to and serve it as the Word of God." Nevertheless, their decision as to what is true doctrine was absolutely prescriptive for all teaching upon their territory, although those who did not agree with their decisions might con-

[1] Briefe, v, 551. [2] Jena, iv, 818. Tischr., ii, 357.
[3] Cf. supra, p. 483 sq. Briefe, iv., 105 sqq.; v, 8. Op. Ex., xxiii, 383 sqq.
[4] Briefe, iv, 142; vi, 119 sq.; iii, 50.

tinue to privately cherish their own opinions, or leave the district.[1] Very soon the Papists began to appeal to the example thus set by the evangelical princes when protest was made against the suppression of the new doctrines in their territory. It was said: The Emperor is also certain that the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church is right, and he must hence exert all his power to banish the heretical Lutheran teaching from the kingdom. Luther, upon one occasion, gave to a nobleman of Ducal Saxony, who had been commanded by his prince to expel the evangelical preachers, the advice, in undeniable conflict with his utterances upon other occasions, to decline the undertaking upon the ground, that the divine commandment bound him to the exercise of only secular, and not spiritual, dominion. In regard to the Emperor, Luther says: "We know that he is not sure of it (*i. e.*, the correctness of the papal doctrine) and cannot be." He found, also, an additional support here in his conception of the constitutional rights of the imperial princes as against the Emperor. Beyond this, his only reply to the claim of the papal persecutors, that they, too, are bound by their office and conscience to adopt the course taken by them, is: "What do I care for that?" It is evident enough, he says, that they, in other cases also, use their power wantonly.[2] But, especially within the bounds of his own congregation, Luther soon found occasion for the bitterest laments over the conduct of the princes and their courts, who now sought to rule as they pleased within the Church as well, and to interpose difficulties in the way of its proper work. He observed among them particularly the greatest opposition to the introduction of a true ecclesiastical discipline. "Satan continues to be Satan. Under the Pope, he mixed up the Church with politics; in our times, he seeks to mix up politics with the Church."[3]

The peculiar mission of Luther, however, did not lie at all within the sphere of concrete, practical organization. His great fundamental principles as to the nature of the Church, to which due prominence was given at the opening of the present chapter,

[1] Jena, i, 579 b. Erl. Ed., lxv, 177. As to the course to be pursued by the civil authorities in doctrinal disputes, cf. supra, p. 566. Erl. Ed., xxxix, 252.

[2] Briefe, iv, 93 sq.; iii, 267. Erl. Ed., xxxix, 257 sq.

[3] Ibid., v, 596. 551, 575; iv, 399. Erl. Ed., xlvi, 184 sqq.; xlvii, 16.

still stand out in their full force and unclouded light, despite all criticisms which may be suggested by the later utterances cited in respect to doctrine or practice. He himself found consolation in the reflection, that the Church, the community of saints, with the Word of God and the sacraments, will assuredly still be preserved, and will arise from time to time with fresh energy, even despite the weakness and obscurity of its earthly existence.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST THINGS.

NOT THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED BY LUTHER—CHILIASM—CHRIST'S COMING EXPECTED—INTERMEDIATE STATE—AN INCOMPLETE CONDITION—A STATE OF SLEEP—TORMENTS OF THE WICKED—SIN EXPELLED AT DEATH—LOCALITY—DAY OF JUDGMENT—VISIBLE ADVENT OF CHRIST—HELL—FINAL BLESSEDNESS OF BELIEVERS—THE GLORIFIED BODY—TRANSFORMATION OF EXTERNAL WORLD—ETERNAL SABBATH.

UNDER nearly all the topics embraced in the theology of Luther, we find it difficult to present in concise form the full wealth of his independent ideas and views. It may appear very strange that the case should be so entirely different in regard to the subject of our present chapter—that there should here, on the contrary, be a *dearth of positive ideas* peculiar to himself, introduced anew by him into Christian theology, or quickened by his energy into fresh vigor. His principal achievement in this sphere was, in fact, chiefly negative in character, *i. e.*, the opposing and rejection of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, and that, too, upon the basis of the fundamental evangelical doctrine of the plan of salvation, against which the theory of purgatory had arrayed itself. The views which he himself adopts concerning the condition of departed souls are but slightly developed. In regard to the final state of man and of the world after the Day of Judgment, he makes no attempt to secure *new* information from the Scriptures, however freshly and vividly he draws upon their resources.

This phenomenon is certainly not to be explained by the supposition that—in consequence, perhaps, of the newly-achieved Christian liberty and his glowing sense of the blessedness already enjoyed by the believer—he felt himself altogether too much at home in the present world to be greatly disposed to more

thorough investigations in regard to that which is to come. Upon the contrary, as a direct result of the full assurance of salvation which he now cherished, the deepest longing of his soul was directed toward those scenes in which alone the spirit of the believer, here continually engaged in a struggle with sin and the world, and leading a life hidden with God, can attain at length to a true knowledge of its own treasures and endowments, and to that general condition of things which is demanded by the deepest requirements of its own nature. Although he teaches Christians, while pursuing their regular callings in the present world, to rejoice in the blessings vouchsafed by the Creator, he yet continually longs, hopes for, and promises the approach of the Great Day which shall bring the world to an end. We must, first of all, make due allowance for the very marked influence exerted upon his attitude toward the doctrines in question by his anxiety not to be carried by human theorizing and imagination beyond the bounds which the Scriptures themselves have set to our knowledge. He saw impressive warnings against this peril, not only in the mischievous invention of a purgatory, but, as well, in the Anabaptist theory of an earthly kingdom of Christ, in the interest of which the present divinely-ordained civil ordinances were to be overturned. To these influences must be added, also, the inward and spiritual nature of his view of Christian salvation, in consequence of which the theory that this earth is yet to become the scene of an outwardly victorious kingdom of Christ had no attraction for him; and, further, his holding of such a conception of the deliverance and renewal already essentially effected in the case of the believing followers of Christ as appeared to him to leave no necessity for a further moral development of their souls in the intermediate state before the resurrection. But, as has been said, the longing desire of his heart was directed simply toward the time when that which has been already secured by them shall be fully revealed in an entirely new world.[1] This he would have made the aim, likewise, of all Christian preaching: "Whatever we teach, appoint or establish, is done to the end that the pious may look forward to the coming of their Saviour in the Last Day."[2]

As to the general course of events before the coming of the

[1] Cf. also our remarks, p. 476.

[2] Op. Ex., xxii, 12.

Day of Judgment, he *rejects absolutely*, therefore, *the doctrine of the modern anabaptistic Chiliasts* and the ancient *Tertulliani*, etc., of an earthly kingdom which Christ is to establish with His saints before that day. He rejects the dream—"as though such a Church should yet be gathered before the Day of Judgment, in which none but pious persons and Christians, all their enemies having been beforehand even bodily destroyed by them, should reign peacefully without any opposition or strife." He knows no ground for any other view than that as long as Christ shall reign upon this earth we shall have to expect continually in His kingdom, which is here a spiritual one, instead of worldly peace and quiet life, enemies, factions and outward disturbances.[1]

But, from the very beginning of his reformatory preaching, we find Luther expressing the confident hope that the *Day of Judgment itself may be near at hand*.[2] He endeavors, also, to find in the Scriptures sure evidence of this, and believes himself to have discovered it, especially in Daniel. He explains, that the *fourth world-kingdom is the Roman Empire*, at the end of which, therefore, will come the end of the world. And we are now standing at the end of this kingdom, which has only in name been merged into the German kingdom. In its decadence, the prophesied Antichrist, the *Pope*, forced himself into prominence, but he is even now already falling. The little horn of Dan. vii. 8, which is to overturn three of the ten horns of the fourth kingdom, has already appeared. It is the *Turk*, who now possesses Egypt, Asia and Greece. But, with all his power, a limit has been set to his advance. His power dare not become so great as that of the Roman Empire, since the way would then be opened for a fifth world-kingdom. These are the two great tyrants and dragons who were to appear before the Day of Judgment—the one with doctrine, the other with the sword; and the Turk is the last.[3] In the same spirit, Luther seeks to interpret also the Revelation of St. John. The thousand years there spoken of he proposes to estimate from the time when the book was composed, but sometimes[4] counts them from the birth of Christ. He ob-

[1] Erl Ed., xi, 85; xlv, 110 sq.

[2] Briefe, ii, 522. Erl. Ed., xxxi, 328. Weimar. Pred., 82

[3] Vol. I., p. 423. Erl. Ed., xli, 233, 243 sqq.; xxxi, 83 sqq Briefe, iii, 427, 517, 524 sq.

[4] Jena, iv, 741.

serves, that it is not necessary to strike the very minute in our reckoning. In Gog and Magog, whom Satan brings upon the scene after the lapse of the thousand years, he sees again the Turks. He declares, also, that, at the time when Satan was loosed, the Romish Antichrist arose likewise with the power of the sword.[1] We have already seen that Luther regarded also other prophecies of the Apocalypse as having already found their fulfilment in the Middle Ages.[2] The increased licentiousness, luxury and carnal security, etc., of his own day were to him a further evidence that the end of the world was at hand. He was also upon the watch for signs in the heavens. In the first section of the *Church Postils*, he had expressed the hope that a conjunction of the planets expected to occur in A. D. 1524 might be a sign of the Last Day. He suggests also the idea, that the end may come in the middle of the sixth millennium of the world (his own age), just as the three days during which Christ was to remain in the grave ended with the middle of the third day.[3] He warns expressly, meanwhile, against more precise reckoning and prying to discover the exact time of the great event.[4] The "saying common among Christians," that, according to Mal. iv. 5, Elias must first come, he rejects because that prophecy has been already completely fulfilled in John the Baptist. That, as some say, Enoch, or the evangelist John, must yet appear, is for him mere empty talk.[5] In the *Church Postils*, he expresses his expectation, based upon Matt. xxiii. 39 and in accordance likewise with Deut. iv. 30 sq., Hos. iii. 4 sq., and Rom. xi. 25 sq., of a great general conversion of the Jews before the end of the world, and hopes that it may be near at hand. He had thought, he says, that the new light of the Gospel might now win many of them.[6] We find no traces of such expectations in his later writings, but, on the contrary, vigorous denunciations and threatenings of punishment for their persistent contempt and blasphemy.

As to the state of the dead between the time of their death and the Day of Judgment, we have already[7] cited Luther's positive declarations in rejection of the doctrine of purgatory,

[1] Erl. Ed., lxiii, 166; lxiv, 256. Jena, iv, 471. [2] Vol. I., p. 423.
[3] Ibid., x, 52 sqq., 64. Jena, iv, 746, 746 b.
[4] Briefe, iv, 463, 474. [5] Erl. Ed., x, 108, 110.
[6] Erl. Ed., x, 231 sq. Briefe, ii, 451. [7] Vol. I., p. 468 sqq.

and also his view in regard to prayer for the dead. The state of the departed is for Luther, upon the one hand, a yet *incomplete intermediate condition*, since the body is an essential requirement for the re-establishment of the complete human personality; but it is one in which, upon the other hand, the final decision as to the salvation of the soul has been already pronounced. When referring to the intermediate state, he has always chiefly in view the condition of the pious. He habitually describes the departed, and particularly the pious, as *sleeping*,[1] finding his authority for the designation in the language of Scripture. The term, when applied to the pious, embraces for him the idea that they are sleeping quietly and peacefully, without tasting death. But he regards this sleep also as a condition in which actual consciousness has ceased. When the souls of men shall be awakened at the Last Day, it will occur unexpectedly to themselves. They will not know how they have passed through death, will think that they have been lying in their unconscious state for scarcely an hour. The soul has in that state no consciousness of its life or faculties.[2] Luther still teaches thus even in his *Latin Commentary upon Genesis*. The soul, he there says, does not in that state feel its own sleep. Although it is with Christ, it does not reign as does He, but rests. To it may be applied the language of Isa. lxiv 16. But he now adds, that the soul does not, however, sleep as in a natural bodily sleep. Although its sleep is deeper than the latter, it is, at the same time, awake, and gains views, and hears conversations, of the angels and of God, in whose presence it lives. It may be regarded as especially characteristic of his representation of this state, that he compares it with the condition of those who during their earthly life fall into trances.[3] Yet he disclaims all thought of gaining an actual understanding of this resting of the soul in its God. It transcends our power of comprehension. We cannot tell what is the actual condition of entranced persons, or even of those wrapped in ordinary slumber. He warns against impertinent questionings, and himself, in a later sermon upon Lazarus and Dives, does not

[1] Supra, p. 471.

[2] Erl. Ed., x, 75; xi, 141 sq.; lii, 269; xli, 373; xiv, 315. Op. Ex., xvii, 125 sq.; xxi, 198.

[3] Op. Ex., vi, 116–124, 329.

enter at all upon the discussion of the intermediate state, but at once makes the application to the separation to be effected upon the Last Day.[1] It is, moreover, very far from his thoughts to establish any dogma upon the subject. The matter of chief importance is, and always remains for him, that the souls of the pious certainly yet live, are free from all distress and temptation, and have, in the presence of God and in the hand of Christ, secure and blessed rest.[2] He speaks very seldom indeed specifically of the intermediate *state of the ungodly*. In the *Church Postils*, he calls the hell which the rich man experienced the evil conscience in which his soul was "bound up" (*verfasst*). At other times (as in the *Latin Commentary upon Genesis*), he does not venture to express a positive opinion as to whether the torments of hell begin at once after death, or whether the wicked may not perhaps sleep and rest, although their course immediately after death leads only to perdition. It is certainly only in the future, at the resurrection, according to Rom. xiv. 10 and John v. 29 (cf. 2 Pet. ii. 4), that they are to be summoned before the judgment-seat of Christ. Yet, on the other side, he cites again Lk. xvi. 23 sq. He acknowledges that he knows nothing about the matter, which belongs only to God.[3]

Of a *continuous moral development* in the intermediate state there can, accordingly, be no further thought. It appeared at first, in Luther's contention against the theory of purgatory, as though the latter would, in his general system of doctrine, be merely transformed, and become a state of progressive, strictly moral purification. But, even in this form, he found it unconfirmed by Scripture and not required by the other articles of Christian doctrine. The greatest importance for the *completed expulsion of sin* from the hearts of the pious, or believing, attaches, accordingly, to the moment of their bodily death, however little Luther may have thought of sin as still cleaving only to their corporeal life. "When we die," says he, "then will our sins all be perfectly cured."[4] In considering the objection to the view, that men to whom in their earthly life there had been granted

[1] Op. Ex., vi, l. c. Jena, iv, 315 b. Erl. Ed., iv, 214.

[2] Thus already, Erl. Ed., xv, 351; cf. also Op. Ex., ii, 95, 100, 102.

[3] Ibid., xiii, 11. Op. Ex., vi, 122, 124; x, 208, 213.

[4] Ibid., xv, 50; cf. supra, p. 455.

no opportunity of exercising faith and thus attaining salvation must nevertheless pass directly into perdition, he himself[1] raises the question, whether God may not give faith to some in the very moment of death, or after death. He replies at once: That God can do so cannot be denied—that He does so cannot be proved. He habitually, moreover, evidently upon principle, leaves untouched this whole sphere of objections and questionings. It belonged, in his view, to the secrets which God has retained in His own power. We may cite, in this connection, yet one solitary passage,[2] in which he recognizes a preaching of Christ for departed souls (1 Pet. iii. 18). But it does not here occur to him to advance upon the basis of the language of the apostle, which is applied only to the souls of the Noachian age, to any further conclusions of his own.

Questions of *locality* Luther does not at all consider in connection with the condition of departed souls, since they have laid aside that corporeal nature which can exist only by occupying space. Thus, for example, he declares the hell of Dives to have been the evil conscience in which his soul was "bound up," or even "buried."[3] When it is said of the pious before the time of Christ, that they were taken to Abraham's bosom, the expression means, for him, that they fell asleep in unwavering faith in the promises given to Abraham, and are "embraced" (*gefasst*) and preserved in this Word of God.[4] Even Paradise (Lk. xxiii. 43 and 2 Cor. xii. 4) he understands not of a material place, but of a condition such as that enjoyed by Adam in Paradise, with freedom from sin, security from death, etc.[5] We have already seen[6] what is his conception of "Sheol," in the citation from the *Enarratio of Psalm xvi.*, of A. D. 1530: "Everything that there is in the existence upon which we enter (*da wir hinfahren*) after life." It includes the fire into which the rich man was cast, and the "bosom of Abraham" for the pious.[7] What has been said above in regard to locality applies here also with equal force. Yet, at the same time, Luther continues to employ local terms, such as "the grave of souls" (*Seelengrab*,

[1] Briefe, ii, 455. [2] Supra, p. 419 sq.
[3] Erl. Ed., xiii, 11; xviii, 267.
[4] Ibid., xiii, 10; xviii, 266. Op. Ex., i, 111; vi, 116.
[5] Op. Ex., i, 110 sq. [6] Supra, p. 418.
[7] Ibid., xvii, 125 sq.; xli, 378; x, 206 sqq.

receptaculum animarum) ; but he explains, again, these "*receptacula*" as "the Word of God, or His promises, in which we fall asleep."[1] The condition of the dead in its relation to our conception of the Where? is for him also a state that is beyond the reach of our comprehension or speech. If it is a place, it is certainly not a corporeal place. Thus, in one passage, he says: "The soul goes to its place, whatever kind of a place that may be, for it cannot be corporeal: it is a sort of sepulchre of the soul, outside of this corporeal world"; and again: "What Paradise is (*i. e.*, the 'place' of John xiv. 2) I do not know. It is enough for us to believe that God has a place (*Raum:* space), where He perhaps preserves also the angels. Things are not (in that life) as they are here ('*es geht nicht also zu*'). He is such a God that He can also preserve any one outside of the world," etc.[2] Even the *conception of time* appears to Luther so wrapped up with that of earthly, corporeal existence that he does not venture to apply it even to the intermediate state. There is there no time, just as with God a thousand years are less than one day. Hence, also, it will appear to the pious of the early ages, when awakened on the Last Day, as though they had been living on earth but a half-hour before.[3]

Luther ventured to say but very little about this intermediate state. He quotes abundantly, and with delight and confidence, from the Scriptures in preaching of the *Last Great Day* and of the new world which is then to be ushered in. Yet, even here, he is conscious of attempting to describe things which lie far above the reach of our earthly powers of comprehension; and he endeavors, therefore, in his representations and illustrations upon the subject, to simply repeat the declarations of Scripture.

He depicts the Lord as *descending from heaven* openly, visibly, even locally, or "sensibly" (*begreiflich*).[4] He vividly portrays His coming to awaken the dead with the voice of the archangel, with trumpets and shouting, as when an army rushes to battle—not, however, without adding the remark, that the apostle here employs "purely allegorical words."[5]

[1] Op. Ex., x, 208; xi, 302; vi, 121.
[2] Ibid., xxi, 198 sq. Erl. Ed., xxxiii, 156 sq.
[3] Erl. Ed., xviii, 267; xiii, 12; cf. Op. Ex., xxi, 199.
[4] Ibid., 344. Supra, p. 137.
[5] Ibid., xix, 153 sqq.; xviii, 342 sqq., 383.

With the resurrection is to begin that kingdom of Christ in which His saints shall reign with Him in the presence of all the world, and all the ungodly be excluded. The latter shall now be *cast into the real hell*.[1] As early as 1523, Luther had referred to those who, like Origen and others of his class, think it entirely too harsh a judgment, and inconsistent with the divine mercy, that men should incur eternal punishment, and who would therefore maintain a final restoration of all men, and even of the devil. He now, and always afterwards, refused to give any countenance to such teachers or their presumptuous notions. We have already cited one of his earlier utterances, *i. e.*, that God, by virtue of the righteousness (justice) which He exercises upon the souls in perdition, makes even hell full of Himself and of the supreme good. We have also observed his declaration, that the ungodly, while feeling there nothing but the wrath of God, are punished only by their own consciences. He warns against any further prying into the mysteries of the subject.[2]

But the glance of Luther is, here also, always directed chiefly upon that which *believers* are taught to anticipate. To them, the terrible Judge will be a brother, father and patron. They are, according to 1 Thes. iv. 17, to meet the Lord in the air, and unite with Him in pronouncing judgment upon the wicked, who will stand trembling beneath them.[3]

Now the veil is taken away from before their eyes.[4] This kingdom of Christ is no longer a kingdom of the Word and of faith; but they see Christ face to face. They look openly upon the bare (naked) Godhead in itself, no longer enshrouded in words.[5] There, locality and temporality cease. "After the resurrection we shall be exempted from places and times": thus Christ also is without place.[6] Now is restored again, according to Acts iii. 21, all that the devil has destroyed from the beginning, and yet more; for, in place of the childish innocence of Adam, there now

[1] Supra, p. 418.

[2] Briefe, ii, 453 sq.; cf. Vol. I., pp. 477, 499. Erl. Ed., xxx, 372. Jena, iv, 482 b.; supra, p. 277. Erl. Ed., xxxiv, 207; supra, p. 291.

[3] Erl. Ed., xviii, 343; xix, 345; i, 118.

[4] Supra, p. 423.

[5] Op. Ex., xviii, 260. Erl. Ed., xxxii, 307; x, 198.

[6] Ibid., xxi, 199; i, 125.

appears manly, perfect innocence and complete glory; in place of animal life, spiritual life.[1]

But in the new, perfect state, the *bodily* life is also to bear a very essential part. Luther is concerned, on the one hand, to maintain the true and complete reality of the corporeal life, and, on the other hand, its exaltation above all limitations, liability to change, weakness or capacity for suffering, in order that in it he may enjoy the blessedness and glory of his life in God. He is especially fond of applying to the transformation of the human body the apostle's figure of the grain of corn. It shall be restored with all its members, and even with a renovated "flesh and blood." The distinction between the sexes shall also be perpetuated, just as the various grains in their development retain each its own nature, the grain of wheat producing a blade of wheat, the grain of barley a barley blade. But there will be a wonderful and glorious transformation in the form of the body, just as in the case of the grain. The body will no longer possess the former needy character and feeble powers, but it will flourish and glow in beauty, without sin or evil lust, eternally healthy and vigorous, without eating, drinking or working, without weariness or any of the necessities which press upon it in the present life. Each one shall be a perfect human being, and shall have in God everything which his nature may demand. This body is called spiritual, because it is spiritually fed and preserved by God, and has its life entirely in union with Him (*an ihm*).[2] There we shall, in the body as now in thought, pass quickly from place to place, as did the risen Saviour, who in a moment passed through closed doors and was now in this place, now in that. The body will have sharp eyes that can look through a mountain, and open ears that can hear from one end of the world to the other. We can therefore travel in the body like a flash, yea, like the sun in the heavens, so that we can at will in a moment be upon the earth beneath or in heaven above.[3] We thus see that, by the existence outside of localities of which Luther speaks, he means a freedom from all the restraints of locality.

[1] Erl. Ed., xiv, 159; supra, p. 343. Op. Ex., i, 125.

[2] Ibid., xix, 133 sq., 143 sq.; iv, 2; l, 411; li, 243, 183 sq.; xviii, 346; x, 74.

[3] Ibid., iv, 2 sq.; xix, 134; li, 183.

All of this, says he, is, indeed, hard for us human beings now to believe—is, in fact, the most difficult to believe of all the articles of faith; for there is no other which is so directly contrary to our own experience and the appearance of things. But God is everywhere in nature, in our fields and gardens, etc., constantly displaying before us such wonderful works—in the green summer, which He brings back again out of the dead winter; in the grain and the developing blade; in the growth of the branches out of the dry, bare tree; in the coming forth of the bird from the dead and motionless egg. It is alone through the power of His Word that this all comes to pass—that Word which called forth all things out of nothing.[1] But our resurrection is fully assured, above all, by that of Christ, our Head. The latter has been most securely attested for us by God in the report of the apostles. Nor did Christ rise from the dead for His own personal benefit alone; but, as He was brought to death only through us, so must we be brought back again from death to life by Him. If the Head lives above, then must we also, who cling to Him, follow Him thither. More than half of the resurrection of the dead, *i. e.*, the principal part of it, the resurrection of our Head, has thus been already accomplished; and that which yet remains of death is to be regarded only as a deep sleep from which we shall suddenly awake.[2]

A similar transfiguration will be at length experienced, according to the teachings of Scripture—and that by fire, as testified in 2 Pet. iii. 10—by the *whole external world.* Heaven and earth shall be changed like a garment (Ps. cii. 26). Instead of their work-day clothing, they shall put on an Easter mantle and a Pentecostal robe. Luther beholds in imagination the whole universe of created things lifted up at the same time into this new life. He sees there a new sun shining seven-fold more brightly than the present one, together with a new moon and new stars; also water, trees and grass far more beautiful—according to the *Tischreden*, also new animals—little dogs with golden hair, etc.—all harmless, beautiful and playful.[3] The text,

[1] Erl. Ed., xix, 128–142; xviii, 381.

[2] Ibid., l, 410 sqq.; li, 138 sqq.

[3] Erl. Ed., x, 74. Op. Ex., x, 392. Erl. Ed., xxxix, 35; li, 243; ix, 106; li, 183. Tischr., iv, 289 sq.

2 Pet. iii. 13; sounds to him as though we should then also live upon the earth. But heaven and earth, says he, will be a new Paradise, wherein God shall dwell; God dwells in all places, and the elect shall be where He is. He afterwards says further: We shall be where we wish to be—in heaven or on earth, above or beneath.[1] There shall be fulfilled the longing desire of the whole creation to be no more compelled to minister to the present shameful order of affairs on earth, to the devil and the wicked. And there shall man, while spiritually living in God, go forth also through heaven and earth to play with the sun and the moon and all other created things, shall have his joy and pleasure in them, and be perfectly contented and happy.[2]

This is "the spiritual life of the entire man, with body and soul, which shall spring from the Spirit (*aus dem Geist entspringen*) and proceed without mediation (*ohne Mittel*) from, or through, God. Thus, the redeemed shall celebrate "an ETERNAL SABBATH and festival; shall be eternally satisfied in God, eternally joyful, free and secure from all sorrow; shall eternally behold God and His works, no longer hidden behind a veil, but with open countenance.[3]

When I know and believe this, then, says Luther,[4] have my heart and soul *already* passed through death and the grave, and are with Christ in heaven, living and rejoicing in their happy lot. We have, therefore, not only the principal part of the resurrection, but we have already passed the two best parts of it. Since Christ vivifies and renews the heart through faith, He will assuredly draw after it its tardy partner, the body, that we may look upon Him with our eyes and live with Him. Of this we are certain, for it is His Word and work, upon which we have been baptized, and in dependence upon which we live and die.

[1] Erl. Ed., lii, 270; xxxix, 37 sq.; li, 183.
[2] Ibid., ix, 116; li, 243.
[3] Ibid., li, 243; xxxix, 37.
[4] Ibid., li, 140 sq.

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